

PRAISE THE LORD, O MY SOUL Psalm 103:1-5

Introduction:

It seems like a very human issue to forget the good things which we experience and hold onto the bad things. Especially those things which others have done to us or have said about us, and we tend to forget what the Lord has done for us. We have a long memory when it comes to our hurts, our sorrows and our burdens, but a very short memory when it comes to recalling just how good the Lord has been to us!

David also had this problem! In these first two verses of Psalms 103, David calls upon his soul to remember what the Lord has done. He wants to stir up the inner man and get him excited about what he has in God and what the Lord has promised to do for him and in him. David calls upon his soul to do two things.

First, he calls upon his soul to *Praise the Lord!* The word “*ble*ss” means “*to kneel with the idea of adoration and praise.*” David knows that God is worthy of all the praise we can render to Him and David wants his soul to be involved in praising the Lord.

Secondly, he calls upon his soul to *Ponder the Lord!* He challenges his soul not to forget what the Lord has done for it! Notice the repeated use of the personal pronoun “*your,*” in verses 3-5, each time referring to the soul! By the way, forgetting is far more than just failing to remember something, this word carries the idea of turning from God to follow other gods. A lapse of spiritual memory will cause the saint to wander! David wants his soul to contemplate all the “*benefits*” which the Lord has given. The word “*benefits*” means “*dealing*”. It refers to how the Lord deals with or treats the soul.

The root word for “*benefits*” is the same root word for “*camel*”. That seems strange to us, doesn’t it? But for people living in the Middle East, the camel’s importance cannot be overstated. The camel has been called “*The ship of the desert*”. They carry great burdens over long distance through harsh terrain. They can survive for long periods of time with little food and water. They are essential

to travelers who wish to cross the burning sands of the deserts and arrive safely at their desired destination. In fact, in Bible times, a man's wealth was often measured in how many camels he owned, (Job 1:3; 42:12). Like camels, the benefits of God are able to transport the saints across the vast barren deserts of this life to our home in glory. The man who enjoys the blessings of God is rich beyond measure, though he may possess little of this world's treasure!

Sometimes the soul forgets just how good God has been and continues to be to His children! Don't we at times allow ourselves to get caught up in the problems, troubles or interests of life, so much so that we forget where the Lord found, what He did for us and where He is taking us? Aren't we guilty of allowing our eyes to wander from the Lord? Aren't we guilty of allowing our focus to be man-centered instead of God-centered? Far too often, we are guilty of forgetting what God has done in us! The world around us is in a constant state of change! We have peace and we have wars and rumors of war. The economy was down and now it is up, it will be down again one day. People have problems with their health, their families and their finances. Even the church is not immune from problems as people come and go. But I would remind you that while the world is changing, while the church is changing, while your life is changing, the benefits of the Lord never change! Why? Because He never changes, He is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8)!

Sometimes, my soul forgets just Who God is and what He has done for me. Sometimes I need a reminder of the benefits I enjoy as a child of God. If you have allowed your soul to forget the things God has done for you; if you are guilty of allowing the burdens of life and the actions of others to influence your walk with the Lord; then God has a word for you! Allow these few verses from Psalm 103 to speak to your heart today.

I. V. 3 **AS A SINNER HE FORGIVES ME**

A. Man's greatest need, forgiveness of sin, makes the top of David's list! The word used is iniquities and it means: perversity, depravity, iniquity, guilt or punishment of iniquity. And comes from a root word meaning *bent or crookedness*. It refers to that evil bent in our nature that pulls us toward sin. It brings to mind the fact that David, as we are, is a sinner, and has been a sinner, and is guilty.

B. BUT, He *“forgives all”* the iniquities of the soul! For us, living on this side of the sacrifice of Jesus at Calvary, our sins are not covered by the blood of bulls and goats but washed away by the blood of the Lamb! All of our sins, past, present and future have been forever put away through the gift of God in Christ Jesus, (Psalms 103:12; Isaiah 38:17; Isaiah 43:25; Jeremiah 50:20; Micah 7:19; I John 1:7!)

If you look at verses 3, 4 and 5 you will see that all 5 verbs the (Note: Please notice that this word, along with all 5 of the verbs forgives, heals, redeems, crowns and satisfies are in the *“present tense”*. Not only has He cleansed me in the past, He continually cleanses me in the present and He will continue to cleanse me into the future, until the day when my sin nature will forever be left behind and I will stand perfected in His presence in glory! That same pattern applies to each of the verbs used here!

C. Does this mean that we are sinless? Of course not! We sin and *“the accuser of the brethren”*, (Revelation 12:10), the devil, stands before the Lord and points out our sins. When He does this, the saints have a Man on the inside! When the *“Accuser”* points his finger at us, our *“Advocate”*, (1 John 2:1), simply holds out His nail pierced hands and says *“We do not know what sins you are talking about. That person is a child of God and they are righteous through the blood of the Lamb. All their sins are forgiven, and all are forgotten!”*

D. As a sinner He forgives me! How could my soul forget that? How could I be so foolish as to become distracted from His glory by the mundane and trivial events of life? *“Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.”*

II. V. 3 AS A SICK MAN HE HEALS ME

A. These bodies we wear are often afflicted with sickness and disease. Some will tell you that this verse is not referring to physical healing but to the healing of the sicknesses of the soul! I believe that it is much more consistent with the nature of God and the usage of the words heals and diseases, to understand that this verse states that God heals us spirit, soul and body. He is Jehovah Rapha – the Lord our Healer!

B. Our souls, like our bodies, are subject to many terrible maladies. Among them are *lust, hate, greed, jealousy, discouragement, depression, anger, fear, guilt, and doubt*. Just as surely as diseases of the body can take away physical life, the diseases of the souls can deaden us toward the things of God and leave us lifeless and weak.

C. Thank God, He has a remedy for the diseases of the soul as well as that of the body! As mentioned, this word is also in the present tense. Each day, the divine Physician visits His patients and through His grace He tenderly and effectively heals all their diseases of our souls.

D. How could a man ever forget the tender touch of the Great Physician as time and again He has diagnosed, treated and healed his diseases? When I think of the help and healing, I have received, what can I say but, *“Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.”*?

III. V. 4 **AS A SLAVE HE REDEEMS ME**

A. Every soul that enters this world is a slave to sin, (Romans 3:23; Galatians 3:22). Every soul is headed to horrible conclusion as well, (Romans 6:23). Thank God that He saw the trouble of lost souls and provided redemption for them. He saw our enslavement and He saw the ultimate destiny in Hell that awaited every single member of the human race. But He wasn't merely content to see it, He did something about it! He came into this world and paid the price for our redemption on the cross, (Revelation 5:9; Galatians 4:5; 1 Peter 1:18-19). Now, those who were slaves to sin and headed for an eternity in Hell have been delivered from their slavery and have a heavenly hope today!

B. I would point out that the word is *“redeems”*. This is also a present tense verb. The redemption enjoyed by the children of God will never falter or fail, (1 Peter 1:5; John 6:37-40; John 10:28).

C. When I think of the fact that I was once a slave to sin, but now I am free from sin's bondage, sin's curse and sin's penalty, I just have to say, *“Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.”*

IV. V. 4 **AS A SON HE CROWNS ME**

A. The Psalmist says that like a king passing down the power and glory of his kingdom to a beloved son, the people of God are crowned with the blessings of the Lord's great kingdom. We are told that He crowns His children with "*lovingkindness*" and "*tender mercies*". "*Lovingkindness*" corresponds to what the New Testament calls "*grace*". Thank God there is grace for the journey, (2 Corinthians 12:9). "*Tender mercies*" carries the idea of "*compassion and tender love*". His grace is matchless and marvelous, but His tender mercies are glorious beyond words can explain! This brings to mind the tender touch of a mother. There is something in her touch that communicates love, peace, safety and well-being. I thank God for His tender touch as I pass through this harsh and difficult land! This is in the present tense! His mercies are new every day, (Lamentations 3:22-23).

B. There have been times when human touch and words were ineffective in the valleys of life, but even in the midst of those times, I have never been beyond the tender touch of my Father! Just the feel of His hand as He reached into my heart was more wonderful than I can describe. The confident knowledge that He, with His rod and staff, was ever present to lead, feed and guide gave hope for the journey!

C. Notice that He doesn't just give "*mercies*", He gives "*tender mercies*". He doesn't just give "*kindness*", He give "*loving kindness*". We serve a God Who always operates in the "*superlative*". In creation, He operates in the superlative, (Genesis 1:20), "*let the waters bring forth ABUNDANTLY*". In victory He operates in the superlative, (Exodus 15:1), "*He hath triumphed GLORIOUSLY*". In salvation He operates in the superlative, (Hebrews 7:25), "*able to save to the UTTERMOST*".

God moves in the realm of overabundance. He operates in the arena of "*more than enough*". We like to say that Jesus is all we need! Or, Jesus is all I want! But, if it ever comes to the place in your life where Jesus becomes more than all you need, or more than all you want and He becomes all you have, you will find that He is more than enough! When He moves in your life, He will never be just enough, He will always be more than enough!

D. How could my soul ever forget that He crowns me with lovingkindness and tender mercies? When I think of His grace and His goodness towards me, I just have to say, *“Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.”*

V. V. 5 **AS A SAINT HE SATISFIES ME**

A. As our gracious heavenly Father He gives His saints the *“good things of life”*. He does not always give us what we want, but He always gives us what is best, (Romans 8:28). Those who rest in Him and draw their strength from Him will find that they are in a constant state of renewal and that their spiritual stamina will never fail. Those who do not abide in Him will have a difficult time continuing in the race, (John 15:5). Those who are drawing their life and satisfaction from the Lord will display a youthful spirituality that allows them to soar above the storms and difficulties of life like the mighty eagle.

B. When the Psalmist mentions the renewal of the eagle, he may be referring to the *“molting process”* in an eagle’s life. As eagles age, their beaks and talons become encrusted with calcium. So, neither is as sharp as they once were. When this happens, the aging eagle cannot hunt as effectively as he once did. As he ages, he also loses some of his feathers. When this happens, it causes his body to *“whistle”* in the air as he dives toward his prey. This destroys his ability to hunt in silence, and so further reduces his effectiveness as a hunter. When the eagle enters this period of his life, he will cease soaring in the heights above and find a place in the rocks. There, he will pluck out all of his feather and break off his own calcium encrusted beak against the rocks. He will even scratch his talons against the rocks until they are reduced to nubs. At this point, the eagle is absolutely vulnerable and defenseless. Many eagles die during this process because they cannot feed themselves or escape predators. But, during this time a wonderful thing begins to happen, to those who survive. The feathers will begin to grow back. His beak will also grow back. His talons regrow as long and as sharp as ever before. After a time, the eagle will step out on the rocks. Flap his great wings and take to the skies once again in victory.

Many of us can identify with the pain the eagle experiences. We go through our own *“molting process”* from time to time. The eagle will only go through it once,

the saint will go through it many times! The answer for both lies in getting to the Rock! There, we can recover what we have lost and have our strength renewed once again. After an eagle has been through the molting process, He can look directly into the sun and he can soar above the storms. The saint of God who has been through the valley and has been restored by the Rock can look full into His face to see His glory and can soar above the troubles and afflictions of life!

Sometimes, when eagles are in their time of molting, other eagles will fly overhead and drop food for those in the rocks below. Scientists tell us that young eagles never drop food for the molting eagles, but it always the older eagles who have been there and want to share what they have with those who are hurting! There's a message in that thought for us this!

C. When I think of how He has repeatedly lifted me from the jagged rocks of affliction and pain and restored to me spiritual strength and victory, I just have to say, "***Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.***"

Conclusion:

Sometimes the soul forgets the great blessings of the Lord, doesn't it? When it does, it's time to get before Him to seek His face and to get a reminder of the great things He has done for us. Have you become so caught up in the burdens and problems of life that you have forgotten His benefits in your life? Have you allowed others and their actions to turn your heart away from the Lord and His blessings in your life? I wonder how many of us are really in a place where our souls are "blessing" the Lord? Or, is there a need for us to reach within ourselves, and say to our own soul, "***Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.***"?