

PSALM 103

Praise the LORD, O My Soul

Bible Study: Jordan Lutheran Church

In Ephesians 5:19-20, the apostle Paul gives this encouragement to Christians in every time and place: “Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” In Psalm 103, King David urges all of us, along with all of creation, to join our hearts and voices in singing praises to our God for His marvelous grace. This psalm also provides us with a tremendous amount of comfort as David points us to God’s compassionate love which moves us to praise Him even in the midst of problems and pains.

AUTHOR

King David

INTERESTING FACT

Psalms 103 and 104 are actually “twins.” Both psalms encourage us to sing praises to our God. Psalm 103 directs us to sing praises to God for all our *spiritual* blessings. Psalm 104 praises God for the wonders of His *creation*.

Psalm 103:1-2

Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. ² Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits

1. What does it mean to “praise” the Lord?
 - A. *It means to tell each other, and everyone else, how great God is and to thank Him for His goodness*
2. We don’t know what occasion prompted King David to write this psalm. But, given its lofty praise of the Lord for his grace and forgiveness, can you offer up a guess?
3. How’s it possible that the king of Israel would ever “forget” God’s benefits? How is it possible that we would?

OUTLINE OF THE PSALM

Verses 1-2 of the Psalm call upon each of us personally to praise the Lord. Verses 3-5 list some of the individual blessings we receive from the Lord’s hand. Verses 6-19 focus in on the Lord’s gracious dealings with the people of Israel. Verses 20-22 call upon the angels and all of creation to join together in praising the Lord.

NOW THANK WE ALL OUR GOD (CW:610)

The pandemic had reached its peak. Thousands had already died, over 8,000 some people said, but who was counting anymore? There were no ventilators, no masks, no sanitizers...Enter this man, one Martin Rinkart. He had just lost his beloved wife to the all-pervasive pandemic. He had already buried hundreds and hundreds of people, as many as 70 a day at one point..He was the one to whom people turned for help and comfort. You see, he was the only pastor left in the city. That’s the way it was in plague-infested Eilenburg, Germany, in 1637, one year before the end of the Thirty Years’ War. Undoubtedly, Pastor Rinkart experienced moments, rather days, of unbearable sorrow, Inestimable grief, and probably much doubt about the goodness, yea, even the existence of God. But ..after so much human hardship, he sat down and wrote: “Now thank we all our God..who wondrous things has done..has blessed us on our way ..with ever joyful hearts.” *(C.T. Aufdenberge, email)*

Psalm 103:3-6

who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,⁴ who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.⁶ **The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.**

4. What are *five* benefits, or blessings, listed here for which we can give God our thanks and praise?

Comment: "Who..heals all your Diseases" (3)

All sickness in this world is a result of sin entering creation after the fall of man. Some sickness can be a direct result of the sins we commit. Drug abuse and its ill effects would be an example of this. But, for the most part, sickness comes because we live in a fallen world and our bodies are subject to disease and decay.

When disease does come, it always reminds us of our sinfulness and of our need to repent. Christians, though, should not view disease as God's way of punishing them for their sins. Remember, Jesus was already punished for our sins on the cross. Rather, God allows disease and suffering to enter into the lives of His children only for their good and His glory. In the midst of suffering, we continue to pray that the Lord would increase our trust that He is leading us only in ways that are best for us.

5. In your opinion, which word in verses 3-5 best summarizes God's loving benefits to us? How?

Psalm 103:7-10

⁷He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: ⁸The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. ⁹He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; ¹⁰he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.

6. What does verse 8 mean for God's people?

7. How does verse 10 shape *our* attitude toward those who sin against us?

Psalm 103:11-12

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.

8. How much does God love us?

How far has he removed our sins from us?

How important is that for someone facing death to know?

Psalm 103:13-16

As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him. 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, and its place remembers it no more.

9. Explain: "He remembers that we are dust."

10. Are vs 13-16 really that beneficial for people who are close to death? Don't they already know how frail life is?

Psalm 103:17-19

¹⁷But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him; and his righteousness with their children's children – ¹⁸with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey His precepts. ¹⁹The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.

11. A/D: You will be blessed if you keep the Ten Commandments. (18)

Psalm 103:20-22

²⁰ **Praise the LORD, you his angels,
you mighty ones who do his bidding,
who obey his word.**

²¹ **Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts,
you his servants who do his will.**

²² **Praise the LORD, all his works
everywhere in his dominion.**

Praise the LORD, my soul.

12. How can we daily cultivate the desire to express thanks to our God?

13. Verse 22 – Given the current religious climate in our nation, do you think a national Thanksgiving Day is self-defeating?