

Bless the Lord and Forget Not His Benefits

Psalm 103:1-14

¹ Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name!
² Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits,
³ who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
⁴ who redeems your life from the pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
⁵ who satisfies you with good
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
⁶ The Lord works righteousness
and justice for all who are oppressed.
⁷ He made known his ways to Moses,
his acts to the people of Israel.
⁸ The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
⁹ He will not always chide,
nor will he keep his anger forever.
¹⁰ He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.
¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;
¹² as far as the east is from the west,
so far does he remove our transgressions from us.
¹³ As a father shows compassion to his children,
so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.
¹⁴ For he knows our frame;
he remembers that we are dust.

Introduction: We know ourselves well

Sometimes when we reflect on our spiritual lives we tend to focus on our failures and shortcomings, and this leads us to believe that we have failed God and are unworthy of His love. Our endless struggle to do the right thing, our constant failures and all the difficulties we face in life due to bad choices become the highlights of our life. We often forget that our Father loves us as His own and He know our weaknesses. He wants us to look to Him for grace, help and direction.

Philippians 1:6, ⁶ *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*

Psalm 103 instructs us not to forget. We must remember that even though we are frail and weak, the Lord is kind and good to us. His goodness has and will see us through. When we try to do things with our own strength, we undertake a burden we are unable to bear. We cannot change ourselves and the things around us with our own strength. Only God can change us and only He can heal this world.

If our godliness depended on ourselves then we have no need for God. We will only see Him as a judge who judges our efforts and not a shepherd who leads and strengthens us. If He is just a judge and not a loving Father, then there will be no place for gratefulness and worship. After all it is by our good works, we have earned His approval and therefore, we should be honoured for our efforts. Since this is wholly our effort, all success should rightly be credited to us. What will happen to our spiritual lives if such thinking were to govern our efforts?

The Psalmist here is grateful to God. He is not forcing himself to remember so that he may fuel gratitude; rather, in the presence of God he is made aware that there are a whole lot of reasons to be thankful for. God is good to us, and He is working in and through our lives because He loves us. This Psalm is a song of thanksgiving for all that the Lord has done.

We will work through this Psalm these 2 weeks. Today we will cover the first fourteen verses.

Worship, Worship, Worship

¹ Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

1. To bless God is an act of adoration. We admire, venerate, respect and gaze at God with awe, wonder and praise. This is what we are made for. We worship the Lord for He is good, and He has saved us through His son Jesus Christ.

“Each time, before you intercede, be quiet first, and worship God in His glory. Think of what He can do, and how He delights to hear the prayers of His redeemed people. Think of your place and privilege in Christ, and expect great things!” — Andrew Murray

“That is what worship is all about. It is the glad shout of praise that arises to God the creator and God the rescuer from the creation that recognizes its maker, the creation that acknowledges the triumph of Jesus the Lamb. That is the worship that is going on in heaven, in God’s dimension, all the time. The question we ought to be asking is how best we might join in.” — N. T. Wright

Worship Him, remember all that He done for you

² Bless the Lord, O my soul,

and forget not all his benefits,

³ who forgives all your iniquity,

who heals all your diseases,

⁴ who redeems your life from the pit,

who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,

⁵ *who satisfies you with good
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

1. At times we are so demanding; and our expectations of ourselves and those around us get so loud that we forget or ignore the many things others are doing and have done for us. We want to have our way so badly that we have not learnt to rest in God's goodness. The fact is there are a lot of benefits in being a follower of Jesus. Whether we acknowledge it or not, these benefits and blessing are working for us. The Psalmist cannot ignore the list of benefits and he blesses the Lord for all of it.
2. When we look at the list of benefits, we begin to see that the Psalmist indeed feels unworthy before God. He is filled with sin; he is sick and stuck in a pit time and time again. He is weary and dissatisfied with life.
3. The Lord had seen his miserable state and has graciously intervened:
 - God has forgiven his sin
 - God has healed him
 - God has lifted him from the pit and crowned him with steadfast love and mercy
 - God has satisfied his soul with good so that his strength may be renewed
4. As you look at the things that God has done as compared to what the psalmist has done, you get the feeling that the Lord must really love this person. The fact is, this is how God treats each one of us. He does this because He loves us.

The Lord who comes to the oppressed

⁶ *The Lord works righteousness
and justice for all who are oppressed.*

⁷ *He made known his ways to Moses,
his acts to the people of Israel.*

The Psalmist understands that he is oppressed. Like the Israelites in Egypt, there are powers in the world that seek to enslave and oppress us. We have no power to break free, we have no advocate to speak on our behalf. The Lord is our deliverer and our advocate. He not only liberates us, He also teaches us His ways so that we may remain free from the forces of oppression.

Lavished us with grace, compassion and favour

⁸ *The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.*

⁹ *He will not always chide,
nor will he keep his anger forever.*

¹⁰ *He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.*

¹¹ *For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;*

¹² *as far as the east is from the west,
so far does he remove our transgressions from us.*

¹³ *As a father shows compassion to his children,
so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.*

¹⁴ *For he knows our frame;
he remembers that we are dust.*

1. The above section speaks much about the grace and favour God has lavished on His people.
 - Will not always chide (rebuke)
 - Not always be angry
 - He does not deal with us according to our sins
 - He has removed our transgression that it is no more before us
 - He treats those who revere Him as His children.
2. The above section also tells us a lot about what we think of our failures. We are weak and prone to error that we cannot get by if God has not lavished us with His grace and mercy.
 - There are so many failures in our life to a point that God should consistently chide us, but He does not. He shifts the conversation, speaking to us in ways that helps us.
 - We tend to fail Him in a way that we expect Him to remain angry with us. He does hate our sin and chastise us when necessary. Yet He is not an angry and demanding God. If He were so, He would treat us as we deserve, but He does not. Instead, He treats us as His children. He is able to love us as children because He has removed our sins have crowned us with ‘steadfast love and mercy’.

He knows we are weak and frail

¹⁴ *For he knows our frame;
he remembers that we are dust.*

Matthew 12:18-21

¹⁸ *“Behold, my servant whom I have chosen,
my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased.
I will put my Spirit upon him,
and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.*

¹⁹ *He will not quarrel or cry aloud,
nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets;*

²⁰ *a bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not quench,
until he brings justice to victory;*

²¹ *and in his name the Gentiles will hope.”*

1. God know who we are. He knows our frailty. He is not here to break us or snuff us out. He is here to heal and restore us.
2. So, worship the Lord and stop beating up yourself. Rather revere Him as the one who loves and has saved you. At times we may believe that it would be easier to move a mountain than to change. Trust God and listen to Him and if you pay careful attention to all that He has done in your life, you would realize that He has been good to you. Take courage for He will always remain the same.

“It is His kindness that leads us to repentance.” (Rom 2:4)

Prayer

1. We will discover the goodness of God more and more each day.
2. We will not judge ourselves in a way that keeps us from His grace and mercy.
3. Healing of the heart.
4. Discover the joy of worship.

Church

- An intimate desire to be in His presence in prayer and worship, where we learn to see God for who He is.
- God will continue to shape our lives through His word, allowing truth to build us as a Church.
- Trusting God with the small opportunities to bring glory to him, uniting our hearts as a Church to care for others, with our resources and abilities.
- A revival in the market place, God will raise leaders after his own heart. People with compassion that can lead change and transformation in the corporate setting.
- God will prepare our hearts to respond to what He has planned for the Church, turning every individual to trust God with their commitment to their call. “*Shape us Lord, according to your will*”.

Christmas:

- 29th Nov – Redeeming Roses
- 4th Dec – Life Explorer
- 5th Dec – Sunday School
- 18th Dec – Lifeline
- 25th Dec – Christmas Service

Covid-19

- Economy & people's livelihood
- Wisdom and good governance
- People will continue to be vigilant in doing their part
- Mental health, stress, domestic violence

Malaysia

- God will guide the leaders of our nation
- Healing that brings unity to the church to embrace her call becoming instrument of reconciliation
- God will restore Justice and Compassion. The leaders will look into the needs of the poor who are vulnerable.

