

Bless the Lord, O My Soul - Psalms 103
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

This is another Psalm that I have on speed dial. Or in other words, I know I need to run to it often. Flowing from the pen of David, Psalm 103 is a fantastic Psalm of praise remembering both the character of God and the acts of God toward him. But the voice of the Psalm is a bit different than most of the other Psalms of worship and praise. Rather than being a song to God, praising Him directly for His attributes and actions, this song is more about God, and is David's reminder to his own soul that he needs to praise. He begins, "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me," and ends with the same admonition to his soul.

This actually brings us to the reason this Psalm is such a wonderful part of the Psalter. It is a reminder that I need to train my inner voice to preach the Gospel to myself. David's opening cry really should be translated something like this, "Hey inner me, hey deepest thoughts and feelings, you need to bless the LORD, you need to worship His magnificent name!" He is reminding himself that the benefits of being in a covenant relationship with the One True God puts him in the blessed position if having the wonderful position of being the object of God's loyal, never giving up and always pursuing love, and therefore being the recipient of His faithfulness, mercy, and grace.

We all have an inner voice. I heard one person this week say that nobody has more influence over you than yourself, because nobody talks to you more than you. True statement. Our inner voice is always interpreting life based on something and becomes the motivation to feel and act in certain ways. As broken people living in a fallen world, that inner voice often is tainted and filled with false views of God and self. Our inner voice can convince us that we are failures, unworthy, and unable to do anything about our situation. It can be rooted in anger, envy, loneliness, guilt, helplessness. Our inner voice defines the way we feel and act when things are going well (often in either self-exaltation or self-rejection) and when our lives are full of pain and heartache. But the big thing is that often our inner voice is actually preaching a false gospel, proclaiming some sort of redemption and hope for myself rooted in a false view of God, self, and the world around me. This is why we need Psalm 103. We need the discipline of preaching the Gospel to ourselves, of reminding myself of the character and benefits of knowing God.

Here is why this is so important. There are so many challenges in life that cause us to lose the voice of the Gospel, the reminder of who God is and what He has done for me. Of course, my own sin and idolatry will obscure God's glory in my life. But our view of God can also be affected by suffering and hardship, busyness, or even prosperity and success. The magnificence and glory of God are there, they do not change. We do not worship and praise because we need to make God glorious, we worship and praise because we will drift away from finding our joy and peace in Him alone toward seeking happiness in the self and other things. We are always at risk and often dealing with two struggles as it relates to our view of God. First, the events of life and our own idolatry make God seem distant. Our problems and struggles seem to be gigantic while God seems to us to be very small. Second, we will often reshape our understanding of God to fit our own desires and views. This is the heart of idolatry. The truth of the Living God is not that He is whomever we want him to be, God is God and has the right to define Himself. But we often create our own spirituality reinterpreting God for ourselves in light of the situation. When we sin we are always determining that something in this world is more valuable than God in our lives, and we often rationalize that God would not judge me for this because He is forgiving. Then when we feel guilty we will determine that God's love and grace are not sufficient to actually deal with my sin and filth. In both cases, we need Psalm 103, we need to preach the Gospel to ourselves. We need to cry out to our own soul and declare the glory of God and the

blessing of the incredible benefits He brings to those who fear Him. In fact, this Psalm tells us that this is the outcome, that we will fear Him.

Fear is an interesting idea in this Psalm, but it is repeated three times. And here is the point. When we truly understand God and see Him as He is, our natural response is to fear the Lord. This is not the type of fear produced by a freak show character wearing a mask and holding a chain saw in a horror movie. That fear would drive us away and would actually be a misunderstanding of God. Rather, this is the healthy fear a child has of a loving parent who out of love is willing to discipline. It is a fear that knows God has for us the very best, yet is willing to deal directly with our sin. This type of fear will lead us to run to our Heavenly Father, jump up in His arms, and bask in His love for us as His children. So we sing and pray Psalm 103, a reminder that when we bless the LORD with all our soul we are joining the chorus echoed in all of creation.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Amos 5	Amos 6	Amos 7	Amos 8	Amos 9	Ephesians 1	Ephesians 2

Reading from this past week: Psalm 103

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Psalm 90

Family Worship

Song - 10,000 Reasons (*Bless the Lord, O My Soul*)

<https://youtu.be/WLkcXsK2lZg>

Gospel Project

Story: Phillip & the Ethiopian

Story Point: The Holy Spirit led Phillip to tell the Ethiopian man about Jesus.

Big Picture Question: Why does the church exist?

Answer: The church exists to glorify God by worshiping Him, showing His love, and telling others about Jesus.

Scripture: Acts 8

New City Catechism

Question #6: How can we glorify God?

Answer: By loving him and by obeying his commands and law.

Verse: Deuteronomy 11:1

Scripture

Psalm 103

- What does it mean to Bless the LORD and why should we do it?
- Does God need our praise? If not, why is praise so important for the follower of Jesus?
- There are 17 different benefits listed in this Psalm. Which of them most touches you right now in your life?

Prayer

*Pray for the new church planting partnership our church has with Faith Community Bible Church and pastor Michael Byrd.

*Spend time blessing the LORD and preaching the Gospel to yourself in prayer.