

# 07/13/25 - Psalm 103:1-22 - "When the Soul Forgets, Mercy Remembers"

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Date: 13 July 2025

Preacher: Brenton Beck

[ 0 : 00 ] We will be reading from Psalm 103, which is found on page 502 of the Pew Bibles. Psalm 103 of David.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me. Bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good, so that your youth is renewed like the eagles.

The Lord works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

He will not always shine, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him.

As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.

[ 1 : 31 ] For he knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass. He flourishes like a flower of the field. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone.

And its place knows no more. But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him and his righteousness, to children's children, to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments.

The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all. Bless the Lord, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word.

Bless the Lord, all his hosts, his ministers who do his will. Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

This is God's word. Thanks be to God. God. Man. Love this passage. There's a hymn that goes, Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven.

[ 2 : 45 ] Evermore his praises sing. Then it continues. Praise him. Praise him. Praise him. So that's by Henry Light of 1834.

I wasn't able to get the memo to the worship team, but let me just like entertain you for a moment and try to sing for a second. There's few hymns that we can sing that capture the heartbeat of Psalm 103, quite like Henry Light's hymn titled, Praise My Soul, the King of Heaven.

Put that on the rotation praise team. There's your memo. This is written as a paraphrase of this psalm today, Psalm 103.

And lights him beautifully, threads together the sovereign majesty of God and his tender mercies toward his people. It's no surprise this hymn was sung at even the royal Queen Elizabeth's wedding, Queen Elizabeth II's wedding back in 1947.

Such a great reason to praise him. Moment when you're joining hands in this providential moment with your soulmate. But what about the people in Texas?

[ 4 : 17 ] What about the Hankins? Right? Is this psalm to be skipped in times of trouble?

Absolutely not. That doesn't mean that this psalm is just for these mountaintop moments of the preacher standing on the pulpit, praise him, praise him.

The psalm is equally qualified for every single season. This fourth book of the psalter that Rick opened up our eyes to last week is a book that has a lot of what's known as lament, a soul crying out to God.

We would liken that to maybe a time of grief. But right towards the end we have Psalm 103. Praise him.

Psalm 103 is a pure, unfiltered doxology to praise. Notice that there were no requests that David just read this morning.

[ 5 : 33 ] There were no requests made. There were no laments. There were no complaints. Just praise. And Henry Light captured it in his hymn. And this should be instructive for us today.

In a world that's full of issues and despair, it's grim at times, David reminds us that God alone is the all-encompassing reason that we can always find a strength within us to praise.

Always. Always. And it's like this emphasis of the psalm is asking us a question. How do we bless the Lord with our whole soul when our whole world feels like it's fallen apart?

Right? It's like it's thrusting us in our day to day. How do we bless the Lord with our whole soul? Maybe you're here in the season where the reality of our fallen world has begun to make praise difficult.

Right? The last thing that you want to do right now is sing, Oh, bless the Lord, oh my soul. But you'd rather get on your knees and cry out, God, why?

[ 7 : 00 ] Why me in this situation? Right? Well, David gives us an answer in three powerful movements in this text.

Each movement teaching us how to instruct our soul when life may not make sense. And what we'll see, the main point today, is that praise doesn't begin with our circumstance.

It begins with God's character. We'll see this unfold in these three movements, and I invite you to pray with me as we enter in.

Let's bring our souls to prayer. Father, thank you for your word to instruct us according to your Holy Spirit, and we ask Holy Spirit to help us in our time right now, regardless of the condition of our souls.

Whether we're praising from a mountaintop, or crying in the pit of despair. We pray that this word hits us today in its instructive nature to give us a reason to praise at all times.

[ 8 : 24 ] We praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. And so, the first section, if the clicker back there wants to click, I'm all out of sorts.

Man, it's been a heavy week. Forgive me. The sermon title, put the sermon title up there for our note takers. When the soul forgets, mercy remembers.

I'm going to get my clicker. All right.

When the soul forgets, mercy remembers. And the first section today is, remember the Lord's personal benefits.

Here we have an emphasis. If we're asking this text a question, what does it mean to bless the Lord with our whole soul?

[ 9 : 26 ] It's an answer in this section. Verse 1 through 5. It's rooted in remembering God's personal benefits to us.

Remembering God's personal goodness to us. Not benefits. Personal goodness to us. And we see that in verse 1 through 2.

David does something profound here. This is interesting. He is talking to his soul. Don't miss that in verse 1 through 2.

He's preaching to himself. How many of you all talk to yourself? Right? Yeah, we all know, Carmen. David's preaching to himself here.

He says, Bless the Lord, O my soul. He's taking his soul by the neck and saying, Bless the Lord, O my soul. And all that is within me.

[ 10 : 28 ] Get all y'all out of here. Bless the Lord. Bless his holy name. This reminds me of Martin Lloyd-Jones who said, Have you realized the most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself rather than talking to yourself?

You're spending too much time listening to yourself. Not talking to yourself. This is important to see here.

This is a Shema level praise here. To love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul, all your strength.

It's Deuteronomy 6 language here type of worship. Calling the whole being to praise the God who has been personally good to us.

If you could imagine, I don't know what you see in your mind. I know what I see. I'm not going to try to describe it. But verse 3 through 5, it's like he's taken his soul on a walk.

[ 11 : 44 ] He takes his soul down a little stroll down memory lane. Reflecting on personal goodness of God.

He says, soul, look. Remember God's forgiveness. Verse 3 through 5. That's the greatest gift of all from God.

Forgiveness. He's saying, soul, look. Remember the healing. Mercy for both the body and soul. He's saying, soul, look.

Remember the deliverance from the pit. Whether that's in despair or distress. Or even death as David was very inclined with King Saul.

He's saying, soul, remember the one who crowned me in steadfast love and mercy. This is referring to something deep. Covenantal. Contractual.

[ 12 : 42 ] That God said he will do and he will follow through. Covenantal. And we'll get into that in Exodus 34 as the song continues. He's saying, soul, our satisfaction is with good.

It's with the good. A life filled with divine generosity. Even the fact that all life could be passing away and be going to crap.

We have a reason to praise if we even are breathing air through God's common grace. We have a reason to praise. I don't have less here to say an amen to that.

That's less's line. Copyright less. You see, this is no superficial praise. This isn't praising God because they got approved for a car loan.

No. It's rooted in the deep work of God's personal goodness along these categories. Personal grace that He has experienced.

[ 13 : 50 ] It's interesting how it's not uncommon for despair and life's troubles to cloud our memory from His goodness.

It's a hard reality when everything in our lives aren't really looking like it's adding up. When just around the corner, you're just like, I wonder what's going to happen today.

Another suffering, another hardship, another trial, maybe providentially around the corner. Another flood. I mean, only the Lord knows. It may for those of us, there have been a lot of loss in our church family, whether it being fathers, mothers, or children.

Grief can cloud our memory. Grief paralyzes our tongues, numbs our hearts. And like I said, if we want to be real, we're not always excited about singing, bless the Lord, oh my soul, right?

When life is really, really tough, it's really hard to say that and not be just lip service. Grief has a way of doing that.

[ 15 : 15 ] But David shows us how to fight for praise. David is telling us to remember something.

It's often said that grief is love persevering. Grief is love persevering, but praise would only mean that that is love remembering.

We praise because we're remembering something. And when we grieve under the sovereign hand of God, we do not grieve without hope.

We grieve as those who have tasted God's goodness, specifically through His mercy. Maybe that's you today. Forgotten the blessings of God in your life.

Maybe your gratitude for God is actually in the approved car loan stuff. You got a car loan. I mean, you could praise God for that, right? But this psalm is a little bit deeper than a car loan.

[ 16 : 26 ] It has something to do with something way deeper than that. And sometimes our perspective of gratitude is rooted in such shallow gifts in this life that will pass away.

And sometimes, if we want to be honest today, our gratitude is rooted in the gifts rather than the giver. Want to be real?

That may we just wish that things in life could just be stress-free. Right. Well, 1 Peter 3.17 says, For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

And the verse suggests that if suffering is God's will, it is more commendable to endure hardships for righteous actions rather than a consequence of wrongdoing.

That suffering has a purpose. Or maybe we've forgotten Luke chapter 6 verse 21 that we covered not long ago. Blessed are those who weep, for they shall laugh.

[ 17 : 37 ] Not might laugh, but will, shall, if you want to go KJV, right? Right. This beatitude suggests that those who experience sorrow or hardship in this life will ultimately be rewarded with joy in the next life to come.

And it's an experience you can have now. It's not simply a promise of happiness after sadness, that everything, they lived happily ever after.

No, that's Disney. That's not the Bible. It's not always the story here on this life. We know that one day we will live for eternity with Jesus Christ.

And it's not always an experience in this life. Ask Tyndale about it. You shed his blood. You see, grace is personal.

Grace is so personal. Make it personal. David did.

[ 18 : 45 ] We need to as well. God's goodness isn't fragile even when your heart is. It's dependable. It's robust. It endures. God's goodness is everlasting.

Everlasting. And we must remember our stories. Remember our testimonies. Our soul needs to rehearse the goodness of God.

Amen. The second section, it's a longer section. I was struggling with this because I like proportions. It's just a big, huge meat sandwich here of something good.

And I want us to taste it. We got... Did I just say that? I did just say that. Okay. I was looking forward to summer nights tonight. So, second section, we have the meat sandwich of rejoice in the Lord's covenant mercy.

We see this from verse 6 all the way, almost to the end of the passage, to verse 19. And so the question is still raised. Okay. What does it mean to bless the Lord with our whole soul?

[ 20 : 00 ] Okay. Remember God's personal goodness. Okay. David's like, meat sandwich is coming. I want you to think about this. And what he goes here is that his praise is rooted not only remembering his personal, just him and God's stuff.

He's looking at God's covenantal character throughout the biblical storyline and the narrative of redemption. Looking covenantal character.

Looking covenantally. Looking covenantally. David doesn't stop with this personal reflection. He moves to this deep theological meditation, which theology is a study of God's interacting with creation.

He's studying that. He's thinking about that. Not just him, but all history. And from verse 6 to 19, after already recalling his personal history with God, forgiveness, healing, rescue, everything like that, he recalls Israel's history.

He looks to history. And might I just add, church, there's a reason why we look in our prayers to prayers that were written long before our time.

[ 21 : 16 ] Because it's good to remember what has been a historic truth of God's salvation in our prayers of confession and some of our liturgy that we use.

It's good. And you see that this is what he does here. Especially with God's self-revelation, if you think back to Exodus 34, God declares to Israel, the nation of Israel, who will say some context about Exodus 34.

There was a little bit of a tizzy that happened in Exodus 32. It involved the Israelites. Moses disappeared for a while. And then somehow they started worshipping a golden calf.

You heard the story? Yeah, that happened in Exodus 32. But then Exodus 34 happened. And God self-disclosed to Israel who he is.

He says, This is the God who stayed faithful to Israel, covenantally speaking, contractually speaking, to Israel after they made a golden calf.

[ 22 : 46 ] This is the God that David remembers. And he says in Psalm 103 in verse 6, He works righteousness and justice.

This is the God, the covenantal keeper. In verse 8, he is compassionate and gracious. It's like Exodus 34 is spilling upon the pages that he's writing this psalm.

Going to verse 10 through 12, huge portion of God removing our sins infinitely as far as the east is from the west.

Literally, you're sitting on a boat. You're looking at the horizon. That's the point out there is the direction your sin is going. It's never coming back to you. The penalty for your sin is never coming back.

In verse 14, look with me. Here's the comfort. God knew the frailty of man.

[ 23 : 51 ] God knew Exodus 32. And though he knew Exodus 32, God knew that he would disclose Exodus 34 about his character.

And that he knows, just as Psalm 103 verse 14, God knows our frame. He knows we are dust. He knows we fail time and time again.

Yet his steadfast love remains from everlasting to everlasting in verse 17 and 18 of this psalm. You see, God's faithfulness does not depend on our memory.

But it's on his mercy. Upon his covenantal character is God's faithfulness. And where we can't trust our emotions, we can't trust our feelings and everything like that, we can trust his character.

We can. We can trust his covenants that he's made. Maybe you're not in Christ today and you're sort of... You're dressed up for church, but you know you don't love Jesus.

[ 25 : 11 ] Right? And it's like you're trying to hide your dust-ness, if that's even a word. I'll make up a word today. You want to hide your dust-ness.

The gospel says that you don't have to hide. You can't make sin better apart from Jesus Christ, who took the penalty off of you and put it upon the horizon.

You don't have to hide your dust-ness. He already knows. And the gospel is not for those who have it all together.

Right? It's for the broken. It's for the sinful. For the forgetful. And the good news of the gospel is that Jesus Christ fully embodied every sentiment of God's self-disclosure of Exodus 34.

Every characteristic and quality of Exodus 34, of God's faithfulness, his covenant-keeping, is profoundly embodied in the person of Jesus Christ.

[ 26 : 23 ] Perfectly. Colossians 1 says that he's the image of the invisible God. And Jesus bore your sin upon the cross.

He secured your forgiveness for your sin. And by faith in him, your soul can join the song of praise for the greatest gift and the greatest benefit from God.

Forgiveness of sin. A personal benefit that David experienced in verse 1 through 5. God remembers our dust, but forgets our sin.

And this isn't to make us prideful, right? Sometimes we can sort of feel entitled to this stuff. We can feel prideful like, well, of course, I'm a pretty good person, right?

Well, maybe you're a Christian and you've kind of been a Christian for a while and you're just like, all right, preacher. I got it. I know the gospel. Well, have you forgotten that God's mercy didn't start with you?

[ 27 : 36 ] And God's mercy will not end with you. It's not about you. It's about God. David, of all people, a type of Christ, a shadow of Christ into the New Testament.

Was literally sitting, reflecting upon God's covenantal mercy. It's a truth that never got old. Don't put yourself at the center of God's redemption.

You're an active participant in His redemption. It's a humbling memory knowing that all we have is Jesus Christ. We're messed up, right? We're dust.

We're frail. I love how Tim Keller says, you don't really understand Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have. Right?

I love Keller. These punchy one-liners. I can't wait till I'm like 60. I'm going to have these good one-liners. Man, straight to the point.

[ 28 : 36 ] You don't really understand Jesus is all you need until you realize Jesus is all you have. Man, that should humble us.

So David's personal worship became covenantal, didn't it? Verse 6 to 19. And through Jesus Christ, he ushered in the new covenants. The new covenant bought by his blood to forgive you of your sins and restore your broken relationship with God.

Worship that endures must be rooted in who God is, not just in what he does. Right? Can't stop at verse 1 through 5. Right? He has given us a reason to believe.

And it has to do with his covenantal goodness. There's two verses left, three verses or 20, 21. Yep. Responding here in cosmic praise.

As we close this psalm and we continue to even ask this question, what does it mean to bless the Lord with our whole soul? This is praise rooted in God's universal coming reign.

[ 29 : 54 ] This is like way future-focused stuff. This is off of circumstances onto the future. David's soul lifts his eyes literally to heaven.

I'm sorry if I get excited. I'm going to get excited. He lifts his eyes to heaven and his praise becomes cosmic. Look, in verse 20, he's reflecting, angels obey him and adore him.

Verse 21, the heavenly hosts serve him. Eyes are to heaven. And then he looks at everything in verse 22. All creation in every corner is summoned to praise.

David joins a heavenly chorus. This is foreshining the myriads upon myriads in Revelation 5, where both angels and the redeemed cry out in glory to God.

You see, David's soul not only surveys the personal goodness of God, not only the covenantal goodness of God, but also this ultimately erupting into a cosmological doxology.

[ 31 : 14 ] theology. This is magnificent because when our souls may at times run out of praise, if that even is a thing, I think you know what I'm saying.

We run out of praise. We can borrow heaven's song. They're singing it. If we would just listen, taking a step back from this entire song, if we can lay Psalm 103 out, we see the directions of this psalm from verse 1 to 5 of my soul and this personal relationship with God.

And then to verse 6 through 19, he includes another circle around. He says, our sin. And now in verse 20 through 22, it's his works.

He goes from my soul to our sin, to his works. In other words, from soul to stars, all creation declares God's glory.

From soul to stars, all creation declares God's glory. See, God's throne is over all, and that truth compels praise from every corner of creation.

[ 32 : 35 ] A Dutch reformer, Abraham Cooper, once said, there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry, mine.

It all belongs to Christ. Stars to soul.

Hallelujah indeed. So whether you've been standing at a wedding altar with Queen Elizabeth II and singing, praise Him, praise Him, right?

You have a reason to sing, obviously. But this also applies not at a wedding altar, but also at a graveside.

We have a reason to praise. Because God's love still reigns. Personally, covenantally, and cosmically still reigns.

[ 33 : 50 ] And so, we need to tell our souls to remember. To remember personally of what God has done in your life.

We have to tell our souls to remember and rejoice covenantally in who God has always been. He will never leave you.

He will never forsake you. We need to tell our soul to respond cosmically. Joining the song of all creation.

Do you see now the main point? That praise doesn't begin with our circumstances. It begins with God's character. Let's believe it.

And here's our hope. Spiritual amnesia, you know what I'm talking about? Spiritual amnesia is not a terminal condition.

[ 34 : 54 ] It can be cured. It can be treated. It can be treated with the truth of God's Word. God's Word remembered, rejoiced in, and responded to with praise.

Maybe the real question today is has your emotional condition outperformed God's revelation? You know what I'm saying?

Has your emotional condition outperformed God's revelation? Maybe our soul doesn't need a new circumstance. Maybe our soul just needs a Bible open and a refreshed memory.

Yeah. We may not know every detail behind why David wrote this. Maybe one day in heaven we can ask him what was going on. Why did you write Psalm 103?

But we know this. He wrote as one who remembered in verse 17 of Psalm 103, the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him.

[ 36 : 00 ] So there is an invitation for our souls to fear the Lord, to revere Him. So whether you're in unbelief, will you let Psalm 103 awaken your soul to faith in Jesus Christ?

The one who fulfilled every promise of Psalm 103 in Himself. Maybe you're in blessing, you're just getting all these things, things are clicking, you got the promotion, you got the car, you got the loan, right?

Yeah! Well will you let Psalm 103 humble your soul with gratitude of the gift giver? Or maybe you are in grief.

Will you let Psalm 103 strengthen you to remember to sing? We don't always, we don't praise God just because life is perfect, right? We don't come in and sing, bless the Lord, oh my soul, because

everything in our lives are working out.

No, we sing, bless the Lord, oh my soul because our soul has a reason to sing in all times, in all seasons. Let me close on the Heidelberg Catechism.

[ 37 : 09 ] There's Q&A; it asks, what is your only comfort in life and death? And the answer, that I am not my own, but belong, body and soul, in life and in death to my Savior, faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.

Will we remember? Ask your soul that. Let's pray.