



## COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

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Let's look at Psalm 103 together. Once you've read this message, I encourage you to go back and read it again during this week. And meditate on just two or three verses from Psalm 103 each day. I've been so excited reading this Psalm this week because there are so many truths in it that can SET US FREE!

*Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name (Psalm 103:1)* "All that is within me." God wants us to love him with our whole heart, our whole soul, our whole mind and our whole strength. Let's not hold back!

"Bless the Lord, O my soul." Bless who? Bless the Lord. Bless God. We are all priests, are we not? (Revelation 1:5-6) And he wants us **all** to minister to **Him**. My co-leader Oscar told me he was once preaching in another church and during the praise and worship he realized that the band was focusing more on certain female members of the church than on God. So when he began to preach he asked the band, "Who are you ministering to?" "To God's people" they replied. "Why to God's people and not to God Himself?" "Because God doesn't need us to minister to Him, but the people do." "You are mistaken in that. We are primarily called to minister to God..." God delights in our blessing Him. When I lead worship, I am not ministering primarily to you, I'm ministering to God. And as I minister to Him, I minister to you as well, because my praises encourage you to minister to Him! God wants us to minister to **Him** and bless Him!

<sup>2</sup>*Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits...* Remembering His benefits. Blessing Him for His benefits

<sup>3</sup>*Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases...* How many of our sins has He forgiven? He's forgiven **all** our sins! What an absolutely massive benefit! And how much did you pay God to forgive your sins? Nothing. Jesus paid the whole price.

He heals **all** your diseases. Do you have pain and diseases in your heart, in your soul? God can heal them. If there's one thing that's certain in this life, it is that at times we are going to be hurt. So we have areas in our life that we need God to heal. Sickness and pain in our soul. Many times due to Satan's lies which we have believed and which have therefore caused us to suffer pain and loss in our lives. God wants to heal us of all of that.

I am a living testimony of the healing that God brings to our diseases. Because I wasn't loved like I needed to be during my childhood, when I reached my adolescence I nearly killed myself looking for love. But God saved me and then healed me of my wounds and the disease in my soul. I'm now healthy and complete and I know the love of God in a very real way. How about your pain and diseases? He can heal them! And it doesn't say He heals some of them. It says He heals them **all**!

<sup>4</sup>*Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies...* The Hebrew for "destruction" here means a "pit". He's saved us from the pit of eternal destruction, right? But He didn't stop there. He rescues us from many things during this earthly life. Has God ever rescued you from a pit? (Perhaps the consequences of a bad decision? Or the hatred of an evil person?) *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life* (Romans 5:10) The divine life that lives in us saves us from many things.

**GOD WANTS US  
ALL TO MINISTER  
TO HIM.**



He crowns us with living kindness and tender mercies. Why does it say, “He crowns us” and not just, “He gives us”? Because to be crowned implies that God bestows honor and respect on us! The God of the universe bestows honor and respect on us!

I once saw a television program about the police force in London. They interviewed a Christian policeman. He explained that when he arrests some of the worst criminals one can imagine, he treats them with respect and dignity while he takes them to prison. That is not what they expect from the authorities. This gives him the opportunity to show them another way to be and to live. He treats them with respect because they are human beings made by the hand of God. Before coming to Christ, while we were still His enemies, He treated us with dignity as human beings. Now that we are His sons, He crowns us with favor and loving kindness, with honor and respect!

<sup>5</sup>*Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's...* Some of you look younger than you did when you first came to the Lord. There is a youthfulness about you, a spring in your step. Why? Because God has been satisfying you with good things. He's set you free from so many burdens and worries! He's blessed you in various ways. And as you receive His love, your youth is renewed like the eagle's!

<sup>6</sup>*The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.* <sup>7</sup>*He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.* Sometimes we wonder about the apparent lack of God's justice in the world. But these verses contain the truth that we must believe. God executed righteousness and judgment for the oppressed children of Israel, who had suffered so much. He didn't do it on their timescale. They had to wait 400 years before their deliverer, Moses, came. But God saved them through mighty acts. Why did He make them wait so long? He knows. He has His purposes and they are all purposes of love. There is a purpose in our affliction and in our having to wait. But **God will always come through.**

The victory is sweeter when the battle has been long and hard. What's the recipe for success that nearly all action movies use? You have the goodies and the baddies. The heroes and the villains. At times it seems that the villains are winning. But at the end, good always wins through. Why has this recipe always made these movies so popular? Because deep down we all know that that's how things are. For the children of God, *weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning* (Psalm 30:5)

<sup>8</sup>*The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.* Remember we're talking about the children of God. He is angry with the wicked every day. But with His children, He is slow to anger. Why did God forgive us? Because of the compassion He feels towards us? Absolutely not. **God does not forgive us due to the compassion He feels towards us. He does not forgive out of sympathy.** He can only forgive because His righteous anger and justice were satisfied on the cross of Calvary. Only what Jesus did on the cross could pay the price necessary for God's forgiveness to become effectual. Nevertheless, now that we are in relationship with the Father through Jesus, we experience God's character as it's described here. It's talking about the relationship which we have with Him as His children. Now we experience His compassion. He does get angry with us as His children when necessary, but He's slow to get there!

<sup>9</sup>*He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.* And when He does get angry He doesn't hold onto it for ever. I used to think God was constantly on my back criticizing me and finding fault. So I felt very restricted and condemned. Now I know that it was Satan who made me believe like that, not God my Father. I had a constant vague feeling that I was doing something wrong but never knew what it was. Now I know that this feeling was Satan condemning me and not God disciplining me. If God our Father wants to correct something in our life, He shows it to us in a direct and specific way. Condemnation is general and includes the fear of punishment. Discipline is measured, clean and well-defined, and rooted in the love of God which casts out all fear. (See Romans 8:1; 8:15; 1 John 4:18-19)

**THE EAST AND  
THE WEST  
NEVER MEET.**

<sup>11</sup>For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. <sup>12</sup>As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. As far as the east is from the west... The east and the west never meet! The north and south meet, but the east and west do not. For example if you travel from the North Pole to the South Pole, and then return to the North Pole, you will travel in a Southerly direction, reach the South Pole, then journey in a Northerly direction. But if you start to travel in an easterly direction from any point on the globe, and travel all the way around the world, you will always be traveling in an easterly direction because **the east and the west never meet**. God wants to show us very clearly that the distance He has separated our sins from us is unlimited!



How far away from you are your sins? Does Satan ever remind you of your past sins and failures? Remind him of what God says about them.

<sup>13</sup>Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth **them that fear him**. <sup>14</sup>For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. <sup>15</sup>As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. <sup>16</sup>For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. <sup>17</sup>But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon **them that fear him**, and his righteousness unto children's children; <sup>18</sup>To such as **keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them**. These verses describe God's benefits for those who fear Him. Those who keep His covenant and remember His commandments to do them. What do we have to do, to keep His covenant; to do the work of God? Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? <sup>29</sup>Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent (John 6:28-29.) To believe Him who He has sent. By faith we have peace with God, and by faith we are His children. So these benefits apply to us! Once more they bring us back to the father/son relationship we have with our God. The tenderness He has towards us in our weaknesses and doubts. The unchanging and steadfast nature of His mercy and justice. Praise God! He has compassion on us. Just like Jesus does (See Hebrews 4:15-16.)

Once I was in a supermarket with my son Tom, at about 9.00pm. He was 5 years old. He began to cry and shout. I spoke to him severely and got angry with him because of his behavior. Later God disciplined me in my heart, showing me that Tom was very tired and being a young child did not have complete control over his emotions in that moment. I shouldn't have dealt with him so strongly. I should have showed him some understanding and comforted him instead of punishing him. As I have discovered more and more how much God has compassion on me, I've been able to learn to have compassion on my kids and this has changed the way I relate to them.

<sup>19</sup>The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all None of these benefits would be of any use to us if God was weak and lacked authority. But as this verse emphasizes, He is all powerful. We sing about how God is all-powerful. **But in our hearts and minds we need to make the connection between His all-powerfulness and His mercy towards us**. These two aspects of His character are intimately linked. His power and authority gives credibility and strength to His mercy. And this gives us great security!

His throne is in the heavens implying that no-one can touch it. Earthly kingdoms and rulers come and go, but His Kingdom is eternal, ever present and everlasting. What is more, He is our Father and He loves us tenderly.

<sup>20</sup>Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. <sup>21</sup>Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. <sup>22</sup>Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul. We've seen in this Psalm who God is to us. Now let's bless Him for it. Let's be joyful in Him and in His benefits, and let's bless Him not just with our mouths but also with our lives!

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"IF ANYONE THIRST, LET THEM COME TO ME AND DRINK"- JESUS  
(JOHN 7:37)