

Psalm 103

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Date: 22 April 2007

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[0 : 00] So we turn together to Psalm 103, Psalm of David. And we begin by noticing that David is speaking to himself.

We all of us like company, we like friendship, we like to be able to engage with others, we like to express and hear opinions, we like simply to meet and chat.

And no doubt we will always be aware of that experience.

And sometimes we may be revealed to somebody, a husband or wife or whoever and say, you know, I've just had a real conversation with myself. I've just formulated, articulated my thoughts about something which is very important to me.

Of course, it never seems to happen when we really want to express those thoughts to others in a more public way. We always seem to sharpen our thinking when we talk to ourselves.

[1 : 31] But David is talking to himself and he is very articulate. Praise the Lord, O my soul.

O my inmost being, praise his holy name. That's the way the psalm begins. He is engaged in a very spiritual exercise.

He is speaking to himself about something utterly wonderful. That is his experience. That is that he knows the Lord.

The Lord God. The living God. The Almighty. The one who is described as he who is seated astride the circle of the earth.

And before whom the inhabitants are like insects or grasshoppers. He is immense. He is awesome. He is glorious. He is majestic.

[2 : 37] And he, David, knows him. It is thrilling. It is thrilling. He knows the living God personally.

Do you? Do you know the living God personally? I hope it is true for everybody here today. And I hope it will be true for those who are downstairs.

That all will know the living God through Jesus Christ, the Savior. If you do not remember the Scriptures today.

If you do not know him, remember his word today. All have come short of the glory of God. All have, like sheep, gone astray.

There is none who is righteous. Not one. Do you know the living God? If you do not, these things are true of you.

[3 : 51] He views you as gone astray. He views you as lacking righteousness. Are you depending upon your own righteousness today? Are you saying that in some way it will work well in the end?

That when you meet with God, you will be able to present to him that which will satisfy him? It's not what God's word says.

It tells us that he has dealt with the problem of our lack of righteousness. Only through the person of his Son, Jesus Christ.

Who as a substitute for those who have no righteousness. He took their place. He took their punishment.

He died. He rose again. And his righteousness is ours when we put our trust in him. What must we do to do the will of God, people ask the Lord once.

[5 : 02] The Lord Jesus. And he said, to please God, trust in the one whom he has sent. It's wonderful to know the Lord.

David knows the Lord. And I'm wanting to just pick up three things this morning regarding the wonder of it all.

Of being a child of God. Of being a Christian. Of being a believer. Of being a saved sinner. Use whatever title you like. One who knows the Lord.

I want to begin by looking at the benefits of doing God's will and trusting in his Son. The benefits enjoyed by the believer.

Look at the way the psalm begins. Praise the Lord, O my soul. O my inmost being. Praise his holy name. We'll come to that in a moment. Praise the Lord, O my soul. Forget not all his benefits.

[6 : 10] Who forgives all your sins. Heals all your diseases. Who redeems your life from the pit. Crowns you with love and compassion. Who satisfies your desires with good things.

So that your youth is renewed like the eagles. What a lot is compressed into a few words there. He is talking to himself.

He is exhorting himself to respond to these glorious things that have been revealed to him. That are his. He possesses them. That which he is addressing himself to remember.

In order that. And we'll pick this up as our second point. Praise. Will be a mark of his existence.

Who forgives all your sins. Verse 3. All your sins. Isn't it wonderful? Isn't it thrilling?

[7 : 20] All your sins. You can't forgive yourself. Some of the things you've done. Are you like me? Sometimes you just blush.

For no apparent reason. You just blush. You shake your head. You grunt or you groan. At the recollection of something that is yours.

Your history. Something you've done. Something you've said. Something you've thought. Perhaps when you see a person. After some time. And you remember the way you reacted with that person. Or it's deep. Deep. Deep way back in your own personal memory. Something just rises out of the depths.

And you shudder. And you blush. He forgives all your sins. Heals all your diseases.

[8 : 20] In a day and age. When we are so sophisticated. In the medical sphere. When our hospitals have so much gadgetry.

Remarkable machinery. Vast. Vast. Competence. In the medical profession. Still we are faced with the reality.

Someday somebody will say to us. I can't help you. He heals all your diseases. The Lord is.

Through David. Revealing to us afresh. It's all dealt with. He redeems. And this is how.

He pays the price. He takes. That which causes us to blush. That which causes us to fear. He is revealed as the one who takes it.

[9 : 26] Who pays for it. Who substitutes for us. Redeems your life. From the pit. The consequences.

Of our rebellion. Of our sin. Paid for. The pit is not where we will go.

By the grace of God. In the Lord Jesus Christ. And he doesn't just leave it at that. And say I've paid your bill. Now off you go.

He crowns you. With love. And compassion. This is David talking to himself. This is David putting words together. Speaking to himself. He's not in front of some great audience somewhere.

He's not being the orator. He's not looking for people's applause. So that they'll say. What a speaker that man is. He's talking to himself. As he recollects.

[10 : 24] The work of God. The merciful one. The saviour. The promised Messiah. Jesus who is known to us. He crowns you.

With love. And compassion. That is the crowning. That the Christian man and woman will know. When of course we remember the crowning.

That the Lord Jesus undertook. At the hands of the soldiers of Rome. And then it says.

Verse 5. He satisfies. Your desires. And isn't that a wonderful reference. In an age. Oh. In any age. The dissatisfaction. That man has experienced. Experienced. Suffered. Even we might say. The dissatisfaction. The lack of fulfilment.

[11 : 23] And this certainly is an age. Where people are crying out for fulfilment. And all manner of alternatives are being presented. An age in which there is a greater distribution of wealth.

Enables many people. To find satisfaction in sport. Or in some social activities. In the taking of holidays. In DIY.

In all kinds of things. Going to schools and clubs. But still. The message that comes back is. Well. I'll do something more. I'll find something else. There is still a need. There is still a hollowness.

There is still a longing. Well. It says. Who satisfies. Who satisfies.

Your desires. With good things. God is good. And he gives to his children. That which is good.

[12:19] And satisfying. So we have this picture building up. You see. And then it concludes. At the end of verse 5. With this wonderful picture.

Your youth renewed like the eagles. In some way we are. Those who have come to know our God. Through the way that he has opened up. We are likened.

To that majestic bird. The eagle. Which. If we know anything about it. Maybe you have the privilege of seeing them. I don't think I have. But. They are known to rise up on the thermals.

And soar in the heavens. They are great powerful. Kingly beasts. God is saying.

This is what I do. When I impart my goodness. In gift form. To my people. I raise you up. I enable you to know satisfaction. I want you to understand.

[13:18] The pit is not for you. I have gone in your place. I have healed all. Your sickness. Your disease. I have dealt with every one of your sins.

Rejoice. He says. And that is what David is doing. Praise the Lord.

Oh my soul. Oh my inmost being. Praise his holy name. Praise the Lord. Oh my soul. So the believer doesn't only get benefits.

The benefits. The benefits that the believer has. Have consequences. And that is something that is very challenging to any one of us who claims to be Christ's.

Today. The consequences. Of knowing him. And of understanding the benefits that come to us through knowing him.

[14:30] And the consequence that we look at. First of all is. That which we find at the beginning of the psalm. Praise the Lord. And I have to ask.

Each and every one of us here today. How is that going with you? Is your life. Is your conversation. With yourself.

As you root down into your inmost being. Is it clamoring. For praise. Not for oneself. Not for one's church.

Not for one's husband. Or wife. Or family. Or one's children. Not for any. But Christ. Praise the Lord. Oh my soul. The idea here seems to be. The word praise.

[15:31] Possesses this. Desire. For the Lord. Affection. Affection. For the Lord. Gratitude.

Towards the Lord. The word holds these various ideas. In the one word. As you behold him.

In affection. As you feel your gratitude. For him. Praise him. You and I are busy. Aren't we?

We're all busy. We will all of us talk. To others. Express. Our busyness. Our tiredness. Can I leave this psalm with you today?

Of one. Who speaks in these terms. Of being renewed as the eagle. Who feeds upon these factors.

[16:28] Of the benefits that are his. Through the knowledge of the Lord. By the grace of the Lord. So that you will encounter. Your busyness.

Your tiredness. You will encounter. Your own inclination. To perhaps excuse yourself. To let yourself off. To say.

Well I can't be expected. To praise the Lord. When I'm so weary. Focus. Focus is a very important thing.

Isn't it? From our earliest days. As children. In the schools. When the teachers would. I don't know about your schools. A piece of chalk. Would go whistling. By your ear. Muir.

Wake up. Sit up boy. That kind of thing. Pay attention. Focus. It is really important.

[17:23] For you and I. To focus upon Christ. Upon the benefits. Of knowing Christ. You want to praise the Lord. I know you do.

Because he has given you his spirit. You are the child of God. It is your desire. You have this inclination towards him. This affection for him.

But you also carry this burden. Of dissatisfaction with yourself. That you are not as you might be. Or dwell upon the benefits. That he has bestowed upon you.

And you will be encouraged. To praise him. Now you look at David here. Now David of course is a great wordsmith. He is a poet.

He is a man who can use words. You and I. You may be very poor. You are putting together a letter. David was not. He was gifted. And now we look at how he goes about.

[18:23] Praising. And it is an interesting approach he takes. He makes use of extremes. By that I mean.

You look at verse 11. And there you read. For as high. As the heavens are above the earth. And he is still on his theme.

And he is still on his theme. You see. So great. Is his love. For those who fear him. He is still on this thing of love.

God's love. God favoring him. And how can he describe it? Well he goes to this extreme. And he says. It is. What can I say?

It is like. Here I am on earth. Well let's look up. And reach up into the heavens. It is something like that. Well he is not satisfied.

[19 : 20] He goes to verse 12. And he says. As far as the east is from the west. So far. Has he removed our transgressions from us.

Well east and west are never. The same. They never are one. You go east. There will always be a west. The west will always be an east.

You chase the west. And you'll come round. And there will still be a west. He says. You can't measure it. You can't grasp it.

That's how far he has removed. Our transgressions. Our sins. From us. You go down to verse 17. And he says there. From everlasting. To everlasting. The Lord's love. Is with those. Who fear him. Everlasting.

[20 : 24] To everlasting. I will never leave you. Never. Nor forsake you. What a salvation. The Christian man and woman has.

And to know it. Listen to the Lord. Focus on the Lord. See what he has done. Is doing. Will do. See the faithfulness.

See the utter commitment. Of the covenant. Lord. See your security. See your blessedness.

How strange. How strange. We are. Can I say how foolish. We are. When we. Permit ourselves. To find.

To find. Satisfaction. In some of the things. We do. To the neglect. Of considering. The good. Gifts. Of our. Saviour.

[21 : 25] To us. David. Doesn't allow himself. Well that's the lesson. We've got here. He's right into it. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. My soul. My inmost being.

And then he enumerates. The various blessings. That are his. That are the gifts. Of God. To his. Never dying soul. You see. We sometimes.

Need to discipline. Ourselves. Don't we? To be a disciple. Of the Lord. Sometimes. We need to speak.

To ourselves. Sometimes. We need to. Exhort ourselves. Not wait for some. Preacher to come and do it. Not wait for. Husband. Wife. Anybody else. We need to speak. To ourselves. We need to say. Now my soul. Take stock. Slow down. Focus. Focus.

[22 : 24] Look at the heavens. See how far they are. The scientists. In the community. Are scratching the surface.

Of it all. Will David the poet. Likens that. To the wonders. Of God's love. For my soul. The apostle Paul.

Is somewhat similar. You know. In his Ephesians. Epistle. And I read a few verses. To you. From that. He is speaking.

About the love. Of the Lord. He is praying. That the people. May be rooted. And established. In love. They may have power.

Together with all the saints. To grasp. How wide. And long. And high. And deep. Is the love of Christ. He is using a similar approach.

[23 : 21] Is he not? Long. And high. And wide. And deep. That they may be. Unable. To see it. He is saying. Step out.

Reach out. Delve into. The height. The breadth. The length. The depth. Of the love. Of God. Well my friends.

We can impoverish ourselves. By the things. That we. Permit ourselves to do. And they might. Undoubtedly. Be quite legitimate. Practices. But if we give them.

Over much of our time. And our attention. We can impoverish ourselves. The scripture counsels us. Speak to ourselves. The apostle Paul. Counsels us.

By his prayerful regard. For the Ephesian people. That they might. Enter into the depths. Of what the Lord has. For them. To know. To know.

[24 : 18] Not to interminably. Speculate over. But to know. It's experience. Experiencing the Lord. In life.

You see. That's what David's teaching us. That's what Paul is suggesting. To us here. If you think of. The apostle John. In his first epistle. Chapter 3. Verse 1. Behold.

Behold. What manner of love. God has bestowed upon us. The Father has bestowed upon us. Poured out upon us. Behold.

Look. See. See. That's a good translation. See. The manner of love. And the translators put an exclamation mark.

At the end of his statement. See. The manner of love. The Father. Has lavished. Upon us. The psalmist.

[25 : 19] The apostles. The wonder of being a Christian. And of how. Praise. Is a wonderful. Assurer.

Of. Our status. With the Lord. God. And how appropriate it is. That we worship him. Now. David. Has used. This approach. This idea. Of heaven. And earth. And east. And west. Everlasting. To everlasting. But then. Seems as if he's not satisfied.

And as we draw to the close of the psalm. We find him. In verse 20. He's just not. There. He's not expressing himself.

The way. He would want to. And he cries out for help. I think. Praise the Lord. You his angels. He says. He reaches up to heaven.

[26 : 17] And he calls upon the angels. To praise the Lord. How his soul is thrilling. At this point. Angels. Join with me.

And praise. Praise the Lord. You mighty ones. Who do his bidding. Who obey his word. Praise the Lord.

All his heavenly hosts. Now whether. That is. Just a little bit of. Hebrew repetition. Which we find in. In poetry. In Hebrew poetry. Or whether.

As some. Suggest. Maybe that is. Reference. To those. Who have gone before us. Jesus said. To the man on the cross. Today. You will be with me.

In paradise. I can't honestly say. I don't know. It might be just. Another reference. To the angels. It is a reference. Though to heaven. To. Cry out the praises.

[27 : 12] Of the Lord. That is what his soul. Is feeling. Oh. What a wonderful thing. It is. To be bound up. With the Lord. In praise. Like this. How we.

Have opportunity. To learn. Bless God. For the scriptures. That give us. Human experience. That which is.

There for us. To experience. It is not. For us to say. Oh but that is David. Oh but that is John. Oh but that is Paul.

The child of God. Is indwelt. By the Holy Spirit. Of God. The child of God. Is saved. To the uttermost. By the Lord Jesus Christ.

Who is the second person. Of the Trinity. The child of God. Is a child of God. Pray. Our Father. You see.

[28 : 15] Jesus wants us. To understand. God is our Father. In heaven. We are not to classify ourselves.

As second. Class citizens. Third. Class citizens. We are not to look at our lives. And say. I have not been. Satisfactory. In my Christian profession.

And walk. We are to learn. From the word of God. And say. Well let that no longer be the case. Let me learn. From his word. Let me attend. To my Lord's word. Let me hear.

The master's voice. Let me walk. In his ways. Let me cast off. My ways. Let me see. My wisdom is foolishness. In comparison to his.

Let me learn. From the experiences. Of his saints. Of the old. And the new testament. Era. Oh how often. We give in.

[29 : 08] To the world. In which we live. The present. Precious. We are the children of God. We are blessed. Beyond.

Our understanding. So he calls on the angels. The heavenly host.

But even then. It seems he's not satisfied. And he calls upon. Verse 22. All his works. Everywhere. In his dominion. It calls upon the creation. At large. It seems. This morning. When I realized. I was in good time. I stopped. About 40 miles short. Of Aberdeen. I pulled into a lay by.

Got out the flask. And had a wee cup of coffee. And it was wonderfully quiet. Hardly any traffic. And then I heard. One of the most lovely sounds.

[30 : 07] For me. A sky lock. Beautiful sound. And I'm reminded of. When I first became a Christian. When just after. Moved to Scotland. My wife and I.

Were converted. And we lived in Schoon. There by Perth. And I'd always been. A city boy. And here I was. In the country. And it was wonderful. And I'd take my little son.

Our first child. Tom. For walks. Straight opposite us. There was a farm. A path. We rode. Up to the farm. Through the farm. Into the fields. And the skylarks.

Were always there. It seemed. Beautiful blue skies. It was wonderful. Being converted. Everything seemed so wonderful. It was. And I remember.

On this occasion. Saying. He probably wasn't interested. But I told him anyway. Tom. Can you hear that? Oh yeah. Dad. That's a skylark.

[31 : 05] I think so. Oh yeah. I said. Isn't it wonderful Tom? That tiny little thing. Tiny. If you put it in your hands. You wouldn't feel its weight. And yet there it is. Up in the heavens.

Singing away. Praising the Lord. Its creator. And the sound is travelling. I don't know. For miles maybe. Tiny little thing.

Pouring out praise to God. I don't know. Maybe in God's providence. That was a lesson for me. But David here.

Is calling out. To all his works. And of course. We know in the scriptures. Don't we? Of how. The mountains. And the seas. The oceans. The rivers.

The trees. The flowers. Jesus will often speak. Of the creation. As the product of God's.

[31 : 59] Genius hand. And will. And power. And you and I. Can look at the sunsets. You and I. Can go. And see the mountains.

One day. Beautiful in the sun. Another day. Covered in. A fresh blanket of snow. We can look at the wonder. Of a new spring. We can see the beauty.

Of a new autumn. We can see his faithfulness. In the passing seasons. David is saying. Oh come on. Everyone. Everyone prays.

Now there's a lesson in this. For you and for me. You here. As a fellowship. Here in Aberdeen. In the will of God. In the providence of God. In the sovereignty of God. You are here together. A lesson.

To come. And rejoice together. But a lesson. Primarily. As we individuals. As we are. Because this is the way. David draws.

[32 : 55] A close to this psalm. Having gone through. All he's gone through. Having. Reviewed. His benefits. Having exhorted. Himself. To praise. Having reached out.

To the heavens. And to the world. To unite. With him. In praise. He comes back. Finally. Where he began. Praise the Lord.

Oh my soul. Me. Me. Before anything else.

My responsibility. Is this. To praise the Lord. The benefits. And the praise.

Of the believer. Are identified. He has. I've gone past my time. I'm sure. But can I just bring. One other point to you. I'll just. Let you just state it. The believer's commitment. Because in this psalm.

[33 : 54] In verse 18. We find a reference there. To those who keep. His covenant. We are bought. At a price.

We have a new. Master. We have. The Lord. As our Lord. He is not simply. Our Savior. He is our Lord.

I am not. My own. This is what the scripture. Tells us. And we have. A full disclosure.

Of the fact. That God. In dealing with people. As he did. From the very beginning. Reveals himself. As one. Who has engaged. With sinners.

In mercy. And he has drawn them. To himself. And he has said. I will be your God. You will be my people. Now that involves wonders.

[34 : 54] Things like the blessings. That I've attempted to speak on this morning. I will be your God. I will care for you. We are further informed. As I said before. By Jesus. Of the fact.

He is saying more. He said. I will be your father. But you will be my people. Commitment. You see. Commitment to the understanding. I am saved by grace.

I will live by grace. To the glory of God. You will be my people. We are to be those. Who remember. To keep his covenant. To obey. His precepts. Discipline. Being disciples.

Saved. Disciples. Sinners. Transformed. Turned around. Enabled by grace. To repent.
[35 : 51] To go another way. And that's the point. We are saved. Praise God. On high. We are saved. Like God.

To do good. Not to continue in those ways. That are not good. And far from. Honouring. To his name.

We are saved. To be disciples of Christ. Christ. Or. To be those. Who keep his covenant. Who walk in his ways. Who obey his precepts.

And so on. And that is challenging. And that sometimes is exhausting. But that is what we are. If we are God's people. God's people. But we must always keep this balance. That David is presented to us here. We are those who have all these benefits.

[36 : 48] So when the time comes for you. To be asked to go through a dark valley. You are the one who has these benefits. And through the darkness.

The Lord walks with you. Never forsaking you. And it is wonderfully so. That by his grace. When we go through the dark experiences. We may go through praising. Paul and Silas. In a prison. Praising the Lord.

And within moments. So to speak. Conversion. Of another soul. Is there a reward. What a wonderful thing it is to be a Christian.

Are you a Christian today? Are you not a Christian today? I thank God. In my own experience.

[37 : 48] In a little church over in Cope Bridge. There are two people. Who have asked to come and see me just lately. Two separate individuals. People I have met. As I have been knocking on doors.

Trying to speak to them. Of the gospel of Christ. And they have started attending. And they have both come. Without reference to the other. And they are evidencing.

I hope and I pray. I trust. Conviction for their sin. And I want them to know. More and more of what it is. For that sin.

So that they see it. As dealt with. And they may go on. Trusting in him. Who gave himself for them. No matter what.

Might cross their path. In days to come. Praising the Lord. Who has met them. When they never expected it. Who showed his mercy.

[38 : 46] When they didn't seek it. Who has revealed to them. The glorious privilege. Of being. A child of God. I'm close there.