

Blessing God for His Blessings

by Bob Hoekstra

The sermon emphasizes the importance of blessing God for His blessings, and highlights the benefits of God's forgiveness, healing, and redemption.

Duration: 56:42

Scripture: Psalm 103:2

Topics: "Worship And Praise", "Divine Providence"

Description

This sermon from Psalms 103 focuses on blessing God for His blessings, highlighting the call to bless the Lord for His forgiveness, healing, redemption, loving kindness, and tender mercies. It emphasizes the importance of remembering and acknowledging all the benefits God provides, including forgiveness of sins, healing of diseases, redemption from destruction, crowning with grace, and satisfaction with good things for spiritual renewal.

Transcript

Well, our study time in this visit together is going to be from Psalm 103, Psalm 103, taking the introduction to the psalm as our title for our study. The study is about blessing God for His blessings, and let's pray together about our study time, shall we? Lord, we come seeking You now as we go into the Word. Lord, we've had the blessed privilege of worshiping You in song.

Now we want to worship You in our hearts in response to Your Word. Lord, we know that apart from the work of Your Holy Spirit, we cannot even understand the Word of God. We need You to guide us into all the truth.

But we also know, Lord, unless we lean on, trust in, hope in the work of Your Holy Spirit, we cannot live out the Word of God. So we pray for our study time now, that You would illuminate and enlighten by Your Spirit, giving us ears to hear, eyes to see, hearts to embrace, and a will to yield to Your way in all arenas of life. Lord, we confess we can only live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, and we thank You that Your words are spirit and they are life.

We pray by Your Holy Spirit they will bring to us another measure of that abundant life that You've called us to walk in. We pray in Jesus' name, amen. Psalm 103.

If as believers we looked over our history or even our present state, we'd have many opportunities to remember the Lord's benefits and blessings toward us. And this is actually a biblical exercise that we're called to, that's honoring to God and is very edifying for us. And it stirs in us a desire to bless and praise the Lord with all that is within our hearts.

And I think we'll see from Psalm 103, this is just how God has designed our relationship with Him to develop. Psalm 103, the first five verses. Blessing God for all of His blessing.

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 iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies, who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagles. It's a call to bless the Lord.

And really, this is the healthy kind of talking to yourself. People get kind of unsettled if they find us or hear us talking to ourselves. We probably all do it at times.

Here's a biblical ground for it, though probably best with this very purpose in view, too. Bless the Lord, O my soul. David, a man after God's own heart, was stirred in thinking of the blessings of God, and it just stirred up in his heart a desire to bless the Lord, that is to give grateful praise to the Lord.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. God has blessed us with many good things. It's good for us to bless Him with grateful praise.

And it's blessing given unto the Lord, blessing given to His holy name. And it's right to do it with all that's in us, with everything that is in us. Deuteronomy 6 gives us that exhortation.

Love the Lord, your God, with all your heart and soul and mind. Jesus quoted that and instructed His disciples to the same thing in Matthew 22, 37. We are to love the Lord with all that is in our being.

He is worthy of that. He's deserving of that. And the more we get to know Him through His word and through our walk, the more our hearts are stirred to bless the Lord with everything that is in us, and to bless or gratefully praise and thank His holy name.

The name of the Lord, there's no name like it. His name is holy. It's not mundane.

It's not ordinary. It's extraordinary. It is so other than anything we can imagine upon this earth.

I mean, people get names, you know, and even nicknames. My name is Robert. I don't know that there's any majestic significance in that name at all.

But most people call me Bob. I know that's not a majestic name. But that's fine.

We all have names so we can delineate one another and communicate with one another. But then there's the Lord. And His name is the name above all names, Philippians 2, 9 tells us.

The name above all names. There's no name like the name of the Lord. In the family of man, there are many names that become famous and stir a little bit of respect or reverence or honor or appreciation, or sometimes the other direction, scandal and infamy.

But there is just something unique about that name of the Lord. The name of the Lord God is given here. Bless the Lord, those four capital letters, is a rendition of, it's not a direct translation, but it's a rendition of the Hebrew word would be like Yahweh, Jehovah, the name of God.

Moses was told, tell them I am sent you. That's this name. It's the name of the Lord.

And though the Lord has many majestic titles, descriptive titles, Creator, Redeemer, Prince of Peace, on and on. The Lord God has a personal memorial, we're told, memorial name, a name by which He especially wants to be remembered. Not a title, but His name.

His name is I Am, the Creator of all, the Redeemer of all who believe. And the New Testament corollary would be the name of God the Son who came to this earth. The name of Jesus.

In fact, Jesus, or Yeshu in Greek, Yeshua in Hebrew, really means the Lord is salvation. You know, Yahweh, I Am, is salvation. What a name that is.

And ultimately, Jesus is the fulfillment of that name in full revelation here upon this earth. And isn't there just an amazing wonder about that name? Those of us who know the Lord, we love the name of Jesus. We love to say it.

We love to hear it. We love to think about Him. We love to talk about Him.

And it's a holy name. It's a high and lofty name. You can introduce the name of Jesus into almost any situation on earth if they've ever heard anything about Him.

And if they've not, there's often just a curiosity to learn about Him. But if they know anything about Him, it's just like a jolt. Blessing to those of us who know and love Him, curiosity, apprehension, disdain with those who don't know Him.

And you can raise a lot of names at work, or in conversation with people, or even speak a little too loud in a bank lobby about someone's name, but you mention the name of Jesus. It's just like, you know. People want to run to it or run away from it, it seems, you know.

And then people want to fight over whether you have the right to even mention the name. You know, let's see, what building is this, and is that a category where you can mention that name? It's astounding how unique that name is. And of course, people have died for that name, and people have devoted themselves to try to destroy that name.

But it is the name above all names, and it is a holy name, righteous, good, and true. And we're called, by example here, to bless that holy name. Express grateful praise over God's great benefits, tied into the person and work of the Lord Himself, and of course, ultimately, that would be God incarnate, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Bless the Lord, O my soul. Good counsel we can give to ourselves. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Soul, mind, emotions, will, personality, character, all that immaterial part of us that is to be expressing what does or doesn't reside at the core of our being, our heart or our spirit. And of course, for those who are born again, alive in the Spirit of God, oh, we're called to bless His holy name, gratefully praise His name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.

Could be translated, forget none of His benefits. Have you thought lately on the benefits of the Lord? It's such a great theme. It's encouraging to our hearts.

It's building to our faith. It's a pleasure and an honor to Him. And again, forget not all His benefits.

It's kind of a Hebrew way of saying, remember His many benefits, the benefits of the Lord. It's good to recall them. It's good to acknowledge them.

It's good to even look back in our history, noticing them and highlighting them. We certainly aren't to live in the past, but the past works of God can be edifying strength for the moment, the day in which we are to live, which is today. Forget not all of His benefits.

Acknowledge all He does and honor Him in light of it. The spiritual favors of the Lord, the spiritual provisions of the Lord. Another way you could put it is remember, think about, acknowledge all the ways in which God Himself undertakes for the complete welfare and well-being of His children.

That's what these blessings are about, these benefits. And there's so many, so easy to underestimate the benefits of the Lord. And listen, those of us who know the Lord, we appreciate those benefits.

We found out we can't live without those benefits. Those benefits, those blessings have changed our lives. And we know from the Word itself, and you can see it in observation, what the Word says about the world, those who don't know the Lord, they're desperately missing critical realities that God alone can introduce into their lives.

So the first two verses are kind of an exemplary exhortation, by example urging us to consider the benefits and blessings of the Lord, and then to express grateful praise and thanks to the Lord for those. That's kind of how you walk in a relationship. It's good for a husband and wife in the name of the Lord to express to one another the appreciation of the great benefits God has brought into our lives through that heaven-sent mate.

I know that my wife Deanie, 41 years next month, she's been the absolute primary instrument of God's blessing through the years in my own life. And I kind of, by natural bent, or kind of a yup, I'm kind of a yup-nope guy, you know. Two yups and three nopes, I thought we had a pretty good conversation.

How's that? What else do you want to know? My wife is quite on the other end of the scale. And I've really learned, I would say, by engagement, one-on-one communication with my dear bride. I was wondering, though, as a preacher, I talk more when I preach than when I'm not teaching, and I wonder if that last song was somewhat dedicated to me, I'll let my words be few.

That's an interesting song as a preacher comes, but I won't be too constrained by it. Unless maybe you want me to, you're very quiet on that one. But what a great example from David.

What a great example. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. And the reason to bless Him is the remembrance of His benefits.

The remembrance of His benefits. And we also not only have that call, but we're given a Holy Spirit-inspired list. Not a long list, but it's a very powerful list.

You know, if we wonder, well, how does this work? How do you bless the Lord for His blessings or benefits? Well, you remember things like verse 3, number 1, who forgives all your iniquities. Here's the

first blessing and benefit listed. Forgiveness of our sins.

Have you thought on that one lately? I mean, that is gigantic. What a benefit. What a place to start on the list.

He forgives all your iniquities. That's gigantic. That's enormous.

And you know, it's so appropriate to have it first on the list. Why? Because that's exactly where we start out with the Lord. It is sin that separates people from God.

God is holy, and He wants people to enter in to a heavenly, holy, growing relationship with Him. But we start out alienated from the Lord, condemned in sin, dead in trespasses and sins. And we're, according to Ephesians 2, we started off far off from God.

I mean, before we turn to the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior, how could you even describe the spiritual distance between us and the Lord? Oh, He's, He was right there. He's everywhere. And as it says in Romans 10 and elsewhere, you know, this matter of faith in the Lord, it's right in your mouth.

It's just as close as, what? Lord Jesus, forgive me a sinner. And yet we were separated from the Lord. And you can't even begin to know what life is to be like and what it's all about unless you meet the Lord, start out right at the beginning point with forgiveness of sins.

What a benefit. Who could even imagine the number of us right now in this Bible study, the sins and iniquities that we committed in our lives, and the Lord brought this benefit. He forgives all your iniquities.

The number of sins represented among us, well, really take any single individual one of us. I know in my own life, just the quick remembrance back of the foolishness of sin and rebellion and disobedience and selfish indulgence and crossing the line of His commands, transgression, and trying to do the best I could, maybe along the way at times to please Him, but falling short of the mark, just not able to perform. And you add those up year after year, and there's sins of action, things that we did wrong that we shouldn't have done, sins of omission, things we should have done that we didn't do, you know? Then the things we did that people commended, but they were the wrong motive, or they were the striving of the flesh, not the work of the Spirit.

I mean, then you read in the Scripture, whatever is not of faith is sin. You go, oh, I'm wiped out. There's no hope.

This is a multitude of sins. In fact, I remember coming up to Salvation's Gate that last week of 1965 when God saved my soul, it just seemed like this load of sin and guilt was just crushing my soul. And though I grew up in a very godly home, God gave my father a wonderful ministry from a teenager on, especially reaching out to inmates, an ex-inmate, gave his testimony, led my father to the Lord, and he served the Lord with all of his heart and soul the next 65 years, and especially watching out how he could bless inmates.

And he went to prisons all over the country and the world, and was so led of the Lord to reach those who were incarcerated and condemned and guilty and get the good news of the gospel in. They nicknamed him Chaplain Ray. And I grew up watching that.

He was a wonderful man, a wonderful father. I didn't even know how good he was until I grew up a little bit. From the time I was 15 years old and then 25, it was astounding to me what my father learned.

He was a blessing, but, you know, those things don't automatically just come to you from a person. Salvation is from God, and even a father who loves you can't forgive your sins for you. It takes the Heavenly Father to do that, you know.

And I piled sin upon sin. It just seemed like it was a crushing, crushing weight. So guilty, and then we read this benefit, who forgives all your iniquities.

What a phenomenal benefit. We can only underestimate the benefit of God forgiving our sins. And he's ready to do it for anyone, all from little children.

Let the children come unto me, he said, and to the rest, he said, whosoever will may come. What a love of God for sinners. For God so loved the world, here's how much he loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever would believe in him would not perish in sin, but have everlasting life.

What a benefit. And anyone studying with us that hasn't enjoyed that benefit, that surely is the one great reason God has you a part of this study right now. If you have not started there with that beginning benefit, it's available.

The Lord has done what it takes to forgive your sin. And the rest of us here, if you don't know the Lord, you know the only real difference between you and us is we have been forgiven, and you yet need to be forgiven. That's the only difference.

And you might feel strange in a church service if you don't know the Lord. That is a very awkward place to be, isn't it? You know, I remember being invited, no drug to church, by my parents before I was saved. What a long hour.

It seemed to me that I now knew what forever was, you know? Checking the watch, checking the watch, looking up, checking the watch, squirming around, trying to stay awake, hitting the watch, you know? But here's the good news. It's worth all that uncomfortable just to hear one of the benefits of knowing the Lord. He forgives all your iniquities.

The Lord Jesus paid the price for those. He took that sin upon himself. He faced the judgment in our place, and he's ready to give you a pardon.

I love to preach the gospel in prisons, though a lot of us think everybody in there claims innocence. I've found it's quite the contrary. Many men in there, the toughest thing they deal with, and dear ladies, too, sad to say, is the realization of their guilt, and it's right there before them every time they look at those bars.

Oh, it's good to be able to tell them there is a pardon available that is good for eternity, whether man recognizes it or not. He forgives all our iniquities. What a benefit.

Verse 10, he has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. Verse 12, as far as the east is from the west, so far as he removed our transgressions from us. Those who come to the Lord for forgiveness, he takes away that guilt.

He removes that from us. He pledges to never again remember those sins against us. Oh, that's phenomenal.

That's glorious. You talk about a benefit. How could you but underestimate or underexplain or define the benefit of knowing a God who forgives all your iniquities? What a good God.

What a great God. What a gracious God. The means of that, the means of that forgiveness of our disobedience, washing away of our self-centeredness and rebellion, the means of it was not casual or light.

God is not a God who, as you could say in the vernacular, sweeps sin under the rug. Okay, you made some mistakes, tried your best. You know what? Let's just start over.

Forgiveness of God is way beyond that. To forgive our sins cost the Father, his dearly beloved Son, dying on a cross. To forgive our sins cost the dearly beloved Son, his own life's blood poured out.

What a price paid. What a cost to God. What a sacrifice, literally, that he might become a God who brings this benefit to those who believe in him, who forgives all your iniquities.

Ephesians 1, I'll read it. We'll come right back to Psalm 103. Ephesians 1, 7, just a reminder, the majesty of this forgiveness.

Ephesians 1, 7, in him, in Christ, we, believers, have redemption through his blood. What's that involve? The forgiveness of sins. What's that all about? It's according to the riches of his grace.

A gracious God who is gloriously rich in grace gave his Son to stand in the place of judgment and go to a cross that we rightly should have earned ourselves and pay our debt of sin as he was separated from the Father and tasted our sins and our judgment and our condemnation. What a benefit. Dear ones, if the Lord had no other benefit for us than this, would this not be more than enough to love him, honor him, please him, serve him, and worship him for eternity? And here's the amazing thing, though.

This is just, you might say, openers. This is just introductory. Sinner, meet the Savior.

Savior, here's another sinner that needs your forgiveness. What an introduction. And as the sinner bows, Lord, save my soul.

This benefit is immediately granted. It's astounding how good the Lord is. Oh, bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name, who forgives all your iniquities.

But as great as that is, it's not exhaustive. It's just the beginning point. Look next.

Here's a benefit, who heals all your diseases. Well, this is gigantic. To live in the human family on a planet where sin is intruded into the relationship between God and people and as far back as the Garden of Eden, and sin bringing death and sickness and grief and agony and tears, and on and on it goes.

The brokenness of humanity, especially the breaking of the spiritual relationship with God. To be without God, without Christ, without hope in this world, in our lives, suffering from disease along the way, from grief along the way, from maladies along the way, physical ones, emotional ones, relational ones, especially spiritual ones. And to have a God who's willing to bring this benefit, who heals all your diseases, who can bring wholeness wherever any kind of brokenness visited our lives, who heals all your diseases,

including those which are unto death.

And sooner or later, unless the Lord comes, everyone faces the ultimate physical consequence of being on a sinful planet. Physical death comes. But God has this benefit, who heals all your diseases, even those unto death.

Maybe not before death visits, but certainly immediately thereafter, and how many times along the way. He heals all of our diseases. There is no disease, there is no malady, there is no brokenness, there is no lack of wholeness that the Lord cannot heal.

Through the centuries for Israel, He healed His people. Through two millennia for the church, He has healed His people. In our own lives, how many times have we been healed? Oh, personally, so many times.

How many times have we prayed for others and have seen them healed? How many times has the Lord just used the common grace of instrumentality with a doctor who was diligent and attentive to his trade and could give some insight, you know. Our God is able to heal all diseases, all griefs, all maladies. He can do it, He does do it.

He may delay, He may delay. His timing is involved with His loving wisdom. Have you noticed an earnestness grows in your prayer life when brokenness is in your body or your emotions? I think with most of us, I know in my own life, that some of the most earnest praying I've ever experienced is when I was in the most desperate condition, personally or physically or humanly speaking.

And the Lord understands that. And communicating with God, hearing from Him in His Word and responding to Him in prayer, this is gigantic in our relationship with the Lord. Again, this is how relationships grow, a sharing of heart and life together.

The Lord can use affliction in our lives, but there is no affliction that He cannot heal. Sometimes we ask for the healing of an affliction and for a season it's no or it's yes, but wait. And sometimes it's no, I've got something else to teach you.

You know who comes to mind? The Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 12. He had a thorn in his flesh, a physical condition, very painful, a thorn. In fact, the word could be translated stake, you know, not just a little pricking from a rosebud or something.

And it was in the flesh, in his humanity. And he cried out that it be removed. And after the third time, the Lord basically made him understand, no, I'm going to be teaching you through this thorn that my grace is sufficient for you.

It was a humbling element to keep him humble in light of all that God had shown him and used him in. And that thorn in the flesh was going to teach him, my grace is sufficient for you. My strength is made perfect in weakness.

But you know what? I know this, and I'm not a prophet either. I know this. The Apostle Paul's thorn in the flesh is thoroughly healed now.

And so will ours be someday. Most Christians that I know that are walking with the Lord strong, the great majority of them have some thorn in the flesh. I know in my own pilgrimage, God has used persistent

physical malady to stir my heart and put me on my face before him.

But he benefits us this way too. He heals all of our diseases. Along the way, he produces wholeness where there was brokenness.

And when it's all over, he will have completely done it for all of us forever. Revelation 21, verse 4. If you have physical afflictions, as most of us do, by the way, the longer we live on this planet, it seems like the more we have those. Second Corinthians 4, the outer man is perishing.

It's a consequence of the general presence of sin on this planet. Revelation 21, 4. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying.

There shall be no more pain for the former things that passed away. That verse itself is one correlation that just concludes all of the benefit here. He's a God who heals all your diseases, all of them.

If we have disease or affliction or grief, it's great to ask God to bring his wholeness and his healing touch. And along the way, we'll see that many times. But if things persist, he has his reason, especially if there's no rebellion against him or no foolishness that's just asking for trouble from the enemy, exposing our lives to the evil one.

If we're pressing on to know him, there are going to be physical challenges. But the benefit, the Lord is the one who can heal all of our diseases along the way, and eventually every one of us for the rest of the way. Here's another benefit.

Verse 4, who redeems your life from destruction. What a benefit this is. Man left to himself is a destroyer, and he gets destroyed.

And the enemy comes only to rob, to kill, and to destroy. One of the great benefits of knowing the Lord is he redeems our life from destruction. I know I first met the Lord when my life was the most devastated and destroyed by my own foolishness.

How great to know that there is a God who has this benefit, who redeems your life from destruction. I know I had messed up my own life almost every way a person could mess it up. Do you know the great benefit of that? That was the very place and up till then the only place I was willing to say, Lord Jesus, forgive me a sinner.

And he not only forgave me as he forgave you, he was also buying us back, redeeming us from destruction, from the destruction of our lives. Ultimately, the full destruction that people head toward is hell itself. You talk about devastation, you talk about destruction, that's it.

And all along the way the Lord is pouring out his spirit and his gospel, inviting people to the way of life, the way of redemption from destruction. Redemption, to buy back. Some of you probably have never seen this, but, you know, they used to put soda pop in soda bottles.

I guess sometimes you can still find them. That used to be the only way. And, you know, if you're a kid, sometimes you just toss it off and end up in the garbage heap, you know, and just full of dirt and filth and useless in that condition.

It was kind of a bottle in destruction, you know. But you could redeem those bottles. You know, there were companies who were willing to pay a penny for them at one time, or later on two cents, or some other time

five cents or a quarter maybe now, and redeem that bottle.

Buy it back for its intended purpose. 2 Corinthians 4 says, we have this treasure, Christ, in earthen vessels. So the analogy fits.

Our lives are a vessel in which Christ wants to dwell. But people are on the garbage heap of sin and death and indulgence. And the Lord wants to inhabit them and dwell with them and fill them and use them.

But He has to buy them back from what? The slave market of sin and death. And that's related to Him being a forgiving God. He's a Redeemer.

He loves to bring us back to our created purpose. We're vessels created to be filled with the presence of the Lord. And to walk about on this earth manifesting His reality in and through our words and attitudes and relationships and priorities and all of that.

What a benefit this is. We who were destroying our lives and were being destroyed by the destroyer of men's souls. We've come to know a God with this benefit.

He redeems us from destruction. He brings us out of those things that are not edifying and healthy, that are rather binding and kind of corrupting in our lives. He wants to redeem us.

He's a Redeemer. When I look at my own pilgrimage with the Lord, and the thoughts come in contrast between what happened before I knew the Lord, I can hardly make the mental connection between the two. You know that guy, that guy they called Bob Hoekstra, he wouldn't even go to a Bible study, let alone maybe someday teach some.

There's no way. He was hell-bent on destruction, indulgence, enjoyment, party and pleasure. You can probably build the same contrast in your mind.

What's the explanation? Our God offers this other great benefit. He redeems our lives from destruction. If you yourself are looking at a devastating scene of destruction in your own life, or have a friend or loved one, listen, what is needed? This benefit.

The God who forgives our sins, He also rescues our lives from destruction to make them usable, useful. Oh, I can't be, I can't be used of God. You don't know what I've done.

Listen, listen, God knows. If we knew the full story on, say, His early apostles, how many times and ways they had failed the Lord, and the things they even argued about after they knew the Lord. No, I'm better than you.

No, I'm the greatest. Well, you may not believe it, but I'm going to get the seat at the right hand or the left, you know. The Lord is able to change hearts like that, able to change lives, able to transform lives.

Every one of us who know the Lord can benefit from this great blessing, who redeems your life from destruction. And here's a great one, who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies, crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies. You know, people say something like, here's their crowning achievement, you know.

Well, here's God's crowning benefit that He wants to place right over our lives, crowning us, the top of it all, the ultimate, and encompassing our very heart and mind and being. What is that crown about? Who

crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies? Crowns spoken of here almost sounds like a royal family. Well, First Peter 2.9 says we are a royal priesthood, and we're going to rule and reign with Christ forever.

But the crowns He gives are not just authority or bejeweled. It's a crown of loving kindness and tender mercies. Oh, what a benefit this is.

Think of the implications of this. We who come to Christ get to know a God who crowns our life with grace. I think grace is a good general term for loving kindness and tender mercies.

In fact, this word loving kindness is one of the closest words in the Old Testament to the New Testament word of grace, which is one of the grand terms of God's vocabulary in His kingdom. God wants to crown our life. His crowning work that He desires is to cover us with, surround us with, encompass our lives with His grace who crowns you with loving kindness and compassion.

You know, John 1.14 says that Jesus came full of grace and truth. Then two verses later it says, and of His fullness we, disciples, we have all received. Then it describes what that's like.

Grace upon grace. All of God's work that gives us life and changes our lives is out of the fullness of His grace. And He just wants to work grace upon grace in our lives till we're just covered, crowned with the grace of God at work in us.

What a benefit. What a benefit this is. His loving kindness, His loyal steadfast love, His tender mercies, His compassion.

Really, we're talking about mercy and grace here. Mercy and grace. Think of the benefit of God's mercy toward us.

Mercy is God's willingness to and provision to hold back from us all the awful, horrible things that we deserve. You do know, don't you, that nobody should want what they deserve. It's a strange time in which we live.

This word deserve is used a lot. It's a big word in our culture now, you know. It's used a lot in marketing and sales, you know.

Get the car you deserve. Get the attorney you deserve. Get the vacation you deserve, you know.

And they think that's supposed to invite us to what they're offering. I'm thinking, if you're selling me what I deserve, I don't want your product. There's got to be something wrong with it if I deserve it.

Deserve is not the language of the kingdom of heaven. Grace and mercy, that's the language of the kingdom of heaven. And by God's mercy, He's provided a way in Christ that we do not have to get what we deserve.

He holds back what we deserve by pouring that out on His willing son who sacrificed Himself for us. God's not a compromiser. He's holy and just.

Justice is huge with God. But Jesus took all that was deserved by us upon Himself. That's mercy.

But that's only part of the picture. As grand as mercy is, grace is multiplied times bigger. Grace is that God has a way by which He can give to us in Christ all the wonderful things we could never deserve.

And in those two words, there is protection and there is provision. What a God. What benefits.

Brothers, sisters, this is a gigantic benefit. Bless the Lord, oh my soul. Forget not all His benefits who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies.

Mercy and grace the Lord wants to put over us like an all-encompassing, surrounding, protecting, providing crown of His goodness. And then you know what's going to happen. Eventually in heaven, we're going to lay those crowns at His feet, Revelation 4.10. The crown of His goodness.

We're not going to go, hey, hey, check this out. That's what men do on earth. What the redeemed do in heaven, they take these crowns of God's goodness, even His crowning goodness, and just lay it down at the feet of the Lord.

And the next verse says, we sang a song. What do you think we're going to sing in heaven? Worthy is the Lamb. All of that goodness, not for self-exaltation, but to just give us reason to say, look at, look at this.

Is He a good God or what? What benefits? What benefits the Lord has? One more, verse five. Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagles. The satisfying, renewing benefit of God.

He satisfies your years. You could translate that, satisfies your years, your mouth, your desires. You know, it's a picture of living, needing, searching, and God brings it.

Who satisfies your year. Boy, the world is so unsatisfying. Pleasures of sin are just for a brief season.

They bring all kinds of destruction, but the Lord satisfies, fulfills, and He renews. And He does it by bringing us good things. None is good but God alone.

And James 1 17 says, every good and perfect gift comes from the Father above. God wants to give good things to us, to bring satisfaction, fulfillment to life, to quench the thirstings of our soul, and to renew us, to refresh us, to edify us, keep us strong and spiritually virile and full of heavenly vitality, even as the years pass by. God has good things for His people.

The world just has shallow, trivial trinkets and baubles. The Lord satisfies us with good things. Think of it.

Good things. Love and grace and joy and peace, fellowship with Him, with one another, ministry, the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, on and on it goes. He wants to satisfy our years with good things so that our youth is renewed like the eagle, like Isaiah 40, mounting up with wings like eagles as we wait upon, that is, hope in the Lord as time passes by, soaring in heavenly places by the work of His Holy Spirit as we humbly receive the good things He has for us.

I guess you could sum all this up with Ephesians 1, 3, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Where should that leave us? Well, verse 17 says, be praying that God would give us a spirit of wisdom and knowledge in the revelation of Him, that we'll know the things of God. You know, all these things, brothers, sisters, all these things, they're ours in Christ.

We can learn of them in the Word, seek after them in our prayers, and watch God do good things, and we'll be those who say, bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. Let's pray together, shall we? Lord, thank you. We do praise you, bless you, honor you this day.

You have been so good to us. Lord, forgive us. Thank you for your patience with us when we presume upon these things, or sometimes even doubt the reality of them.

Thank you for all your benefits, Lord. May you be honored and glorified in our lives, even as we are edified and built up in you and your good works. Lord, make us instruments of your benefits to those we meet day by day, we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. God bless you.

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