

A God of Mercy

by James Booker

This sermon emphasizes the importance of praising God and remembering His benefits, particularly His mercy, in order to cultivate a deeper trust in Him and a more vibrant Christian life.

Duration: 37:05

Scripture: Psalm 103:1-3, Psalm 103:12-13, Matthew 6:33, 1 John 1:7

Topics: "Gods Mercy", "Salvation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the five 'who's' mentioned in Psalm 103:3-5. The first 'who' is God, who forgives all sins. The second 'who' is God, who heals and restores. The third 'who' is God, who redeems and buys us back from the slave market of sin. The fourth 'who' is God, who satisfies our needs with good things. The speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing and praising God for these blessings and encourages listeners to accept Christ as their Savior to experience these benefits.

Transcript

It's a privilege to be back with you once again, and to be able to fill in during this week, and since being asked to be here, I've been praying before the Lord as to the ministry that he would have me give during this time, and my thoughts have been centered around the psalms primarily, so I want to consider a few psalms in the evening. I want to begin this morning. I want to look at a lovely psalm that I'm sure all of you are well-acquainted with.

It's a delightful psalm. I trust it'll just warm and stir your hearts afresh this morning. Shall we turn, please, to Psalm 103.

Psalm 103, beginning at verse 1. 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 forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercy, who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle. The Lord executes righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.

He made known his ways unto Moses and his acts unto the children of Israel. The Lord is merciful and gracious. He is slow to anger.

He is plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide, and neither will he keep his anger forever. He has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. And as far as the east is from the west, so far have you removed our transgressions from us. Let's have a brief word of prayer, please.

Our Father, we thank and praise thee for the privilege of meeting together in this simple manner. We praise thee for thy words, a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. We rejoice in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God and his desire to take of the things of Christ and reveal them to us.

And we pray this morning, if I would just guide and direct this brief time together, touch our hearts, we pray. We pray for any here this morning who perhaps at this moment have never, up to this moment, accepted Christ as their Savior and Lord. May they realize the seriousness, the awfulness of going into a lost eternity without Christ.

We pray in turn thou will stir the hearts of us, thy people, to know something of thy glories and to be appraising people. For this we ask in our Savior's precious name, amen. As with many who are involved in serving the Lord, it's my lot to get into the hospital frequently and into the homes of people who are not well, and frequently taking a portion of scripture and meditating upon that with the one who has been laid aside in sickness.

Oftentimes I will say to them, perhaps you have a portion that you would like us to read at this particular time. Invariably they will mention some particular psalm that has been a blessing to them. And I'm sure that if we went around this gathering this morning and asked you some of your favorite portions of scripture, you'd no doubt end up somewhere along the line in the psalms and some of the lovely psalms that the Lord has used by his grace through the Holy Spirit of God to comfort and strengthen you during times of trial, times of difficulty, or maybe challenge you, whatever the case might be.

And so with that in mind, I just want to challenge our hearts here this morning with this particular psalm. We'll look at it a little this morning, and then again this evening, and then we'll go on to another psalm on Tuesday night. I want to consider with you here what to me is a challenge of a God of mercy and a thankful people.

A God of mercy and a thankful people. Rather a tragedy, is it not, that as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, so often we are murmuring, we're complaining. We come to a meeting like this, and we sing these songs and hymns of praise, and our hearts are moved.

We come to the Lord's Supper, as many of us did a short while ago, and the very first hymn spoke about praise to the Lord of glory, and our hearts are moved as we consider what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us, and the murmuring doesn't seem to fit into the picture at all. But somehow when we get out in daily activities and get involved in certain situations and difficulties, it's not too difficult to begin to murmur and complain. One of the challenges I get from this particular psalm is the fact that in regard to what the circumstances are in which I'm placed, the Lord can be the center in that situation, and praise and adoration can ascend forth to him.

You remember over in the book of Philippians, it reminds us where that we're not to be murmuring. Do all things without murmuring and disputing. You remember in the early church, we find that it wasn't too long

before there arose a murmuring among the Grecians concerning the way the money was being distributed.

You remember the Lord challenges through the Apostle Paul and Corinthians that we do not be murmurers like those who in the old testament. This is interesting to notice back in the old testament how the Israelites again and again seem to be involved in this spirit of complaining and murmuring. One moment they were up on the mountaintop, and they were praising the Lord.

The next moment they seem to be down in the valley of discouragement, and they were complaining about their situation. We can just change so rapidly. We can be so vibrant for the things of Christ one moment, and lose that vibrance the next.

In fact, over 20 times we read concerning the Israelites that they murmured. Just go back for a moment, if you will, to Exodus chapter 15. Exodus chapter 15.

You notice in verse 24 of Exodus chapter 15, it says, "...and the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?" Now go on to verse 2 of chapter 16, "...and the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness." Verse 7, "...in the morning then ye shall see the glory of the Lord, for that he heareth your murmurings against the Lord." Now, you see they were murmuring against Moses, but as far as the Lord was concerned it was murmuring against him, because Moses was the Lord's instrument. He was the Lord's servant, and as they complained against the servant, they were complaining against the Lord himself. And what we are that we murmur against us.

You go on to verse 8, "...and Moses said, This shall be when the Lord shall give you the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full, for the Lord heareth your murmurings." Interesting to remember that, is it not? The Lord hears our murmurings, not only to our friends, those around us, but the Lord listens in. "...when ye murmur against him, and what are we? Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord." The latter part of verse 9, "...for he heareth your murmurings." Verse 12, "...I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, speak unto them." And then when you go over to chapter 17 again, you'll notice in verse 3, "...and the people thirsted there for water, and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt to kill us, and our children, and our cattle with thirst? A murmuring people. And yet how gracious, and how loving, and how kind the Lord was to those dear murmuring people." In contrast to that, you'll recall throughout the scriptures the emphasis is placed upon the need to be so thankful, the need to praise him.

We have so much to thank the Lord for. You remember the Ten Lepers, and only one came back to thank the Lord. I remember reading just recently an account of a man who was thinking back on his childhood days, in his younger days, and he thought to himself, I think of a dear teacher that I had, and what a blessing she was to me as I was going off through school, and she took time out to help me over different rough spots, and he thought to himself, I think I should write her a letter.

So he wrote her a letter of thanks. Sometime later, not too long, he received a letter from her, and she was just so ecstatic with excitement. She said, I've been teaching for 50 years, so I've tried to help thousands of students.

She says, yours is the first letter I've received of thanks. Well, applying that to the Lord above you, how much time do we take out just to meditate upon his goodness, and to thank him, and to praise him? Over in the Psalms 119, the psalmist says, seven times a day, seven times a day, I will praise thee. You

remember, again, if you go back to 1st Chronicles chapter 16, you recall that David had been able to capture the Ark again.

They had lost the Ark of the Covenant, and with great rejoicing, they came back to the city with the Ark, and they set it up in the midst, and if you read that account in 1st Chronicles chapter 16, you find that there is tremendous excitement because they have, as their sender, that Ark once more, and as you know, the Ark was representative of the Lord's presence. They had the Lord as their sender once again, eyes off themselves, off their problems, off their trials, eyes on the Lord, and there, as they centered their eyes upon him, were told that the people began to thank and to praise the Lord, and David wrote a lovely psalm of that particular time, and the psalm begins in 1st Chronicles 16, concerning, I will thank and praise the Lord. Let me get our eyes off him, beloved, that the moanings, and the groanings, and the complainings begin to slip in into our life.

You remember, if you went over to 1st Chronicles, I think it's around verse chapter 23, you'll find that when David set up the preparation for the worship of the tabernacle, there were some 4,000, 4,000 Levites that were set upon, and their goal, their purpose, was to stand at the door and was to praise the Lord. So, this psalm is a psalm of praise. It's a psalm of adoration.

It tells us here, at the very beginning, it's a psalm of David, and you notice, as you go through this particular psalm, that the word bless is used some seven times. You'll notice, let's just look at it briefly, if you have it before you. It says, bless the Lord, O my soul, bless his holy name, bless the Lord.

Then you go farther down to the end of the psalm, and in verse 20 it says, bless the Lord. In verse 21, bless ye the Lord. Verse 22, bless the Lord, and finally, bless the Lord, O my soul, seven times.

Now, this word bless is an interesting word, and it's frequently, in new translations, translated to praise, and it has that thought. It sometimes is translated in the word of God to bow the knee. It's the idea of bowing the knee in reverence and giving adoration and praise to the Lord.

You remember the psalms, for example, they begin with the word bless. It's a different word in psalm chapter one. Blessed is the man that walketh not on the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, and so on.

He is delighted in the law of the Lord. That word blessed is a thought of the happiness, oh the happiness, the happiness of one who's delighting in the word of God. You remember in chapter two, he talks about, oh the happiness of the one who's trusting in the Lord.

You go on, you remember in psalm 32, and we're told over there, the happiness of the ones whose sins are forgiven. Remember that? The happiness of sin forgiven, the happiness of trusting in him, the happiness of entering into the word of God and rejoicing in what the word of God has for you. And then when you come to the end of the psalms, remember you get way on to psalm 150, and some nine times over in that little psalm, you'll recall that he talks about praise the Lord.

And he gives a number of reasons why we ought to be praising him. A happy people is praising him. Notice again, please, as we look at this particular psalm, have you ever wondered the background to these psalms? Now, apparently this particular psalm is not one that is clear as to what the background of it is.

Scholars differ in their thinking. They've looked over the psalm carefully, and they've tried to analyze what part of David's life was this psalm composed, and we can't be sure, apparently. But many have the idea it happened during one of David's difficult times, possibly during that time when he was off the throne and Absalom was pursuing him his own son.

Just imagine your own son turning against you, fleeing for your life, knowing that out there in the darkness, out in the wilderness where there was your son and there were the men out there, our men that used to belong to you as part of your army, and now they're out there seeking to destroy your life. And it's possible it was during that particular period of time that David penned these words. As he took his quill of whatever he used to write, he begins by saying praise the Lord.

Sometimes we get the idea that praising him and knowing the joy of praise in the Lord only comes when things are going well, but you see there is a joy and there is a peace and there is a delight in the things of Christ in the midst of trials, in the midst of difficulty, in the midst of circumstances. There is the joy of alone. There is that joy which the Spirit of God produces in the lives of his people.

You remember in Acts chapter 16, for example, when Paul and Silas having been preaching the gospel so faithfully in Philippi, suddenly the crowd turn against them. They're taken, they're beaten, their clothes are taken from their backs, they're thrust into a prison, down into the dungeon, hands and feet on the stocks, and Paul turned to Silas and said, if I ever get out of this I'm handing my resignation. I've had it here.

I'm out preaching the word of God and here all these trials. No, remember they began to sing and praise the Lord. There was an inner joy in spite of the circumstances.

There was an inner joy and there was a consciousness of the Lord's presence. When he wrote his letter to the Philippians, you remember the theme is that of rejoicing. Paul is in prison, but there's a joy there, and this is part of the delight of the Christian life, beloved.

Joy in him. I trust that you you're experiencing that in your Christian life. Notice again, as we look at this psalm, the word mercy is very, very prominent.

Five times the word mercy in various forms is used here. You notice what kind of mercies the Lord has to ward off in verse four? Their tender mercies. Their tender mercies.

Do you notice where the mercies come from? From the Lord in verse eight. The Lord is merciful. The Lord is merciful.

Notice the quantity of his mercy. He's plenteous in mercy in verse eight. Do you notice as you go farther down in verse 11, where the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him? The greatness of his mercies.

You go down to verse 17, and we're told that the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. It's an eternal mercy. Now, this word mercy is an interesting word.

It's translated so many different ways in the in the scriptures. Sometimes it's translated compassion. Oh, the compassion to the Lord.

There's a lovely little phrase over in the book of Daniel, chapter one, and there it's translated tender love. Tender love. It's a thought of kindness.

Loving kindness. And, oh, the loving kindness of our God on my watch. And so, with that in mind, I want you to just divide the psalm with me in this way.

I want to look at it in three different sections here, from verse one down to verse five. We have individual praise for the Lord, or to the Lord for his mercy. Individual praise to the Lord for his mercy.

When you come to verse six, and you read on down to verse 18, you have national praise to the Lord for his mercy. And, finally, when you get down to verse 19 to the end, you have universal praise to the Lord for his mercy. It's really exciting to see the development in this particular psalm.

It begins with the individual, and there this individual is wrapped up in the Lord's mercy. He is rejoicing in those mercies. It's not long before the whole nation seems to be involved in shouting forth the praises of the Lord for his mercy.

And, in the end, the whole universe, in heaven, heaven and heaven, here upon earth, there's praise to God. It just grows. It reminds you of Revelation, chapter five, if enough.

As the saints of God seem to gather around the throne, and the Lamb is the center, and they begin to sing that new song. Not long before all the hosts of heaven join in, and at the end of that particular song of Revelation five, you recall, they're all bowed before the throne praising him. There's something about being with people who rejoice.

I don't mean going around just saying, praise the Lord, all of that. I mean knowing that joy in one's heart, something about being with one like that, that it's rather catching it enough. Just like it's catching if you're with someone who's always grumbling and complaining.

It either works in one direction or the other. Well, David is excited about what he has in in the Lord. Notice this individual praise.

Did you notice how it begins in verse one? Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me. Bless his holy name. Now, compare that with verse two.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. You see, in Psalm 103 and 1, he's praising the Lord for who he is. Bless the Lord.

If you were here earlier in the meeting, the part of the theme of that meeting was to do with the holiness of the Lord. Holy, holy, holy. And as our hearts were taken up with him and his holiness, one cannot be drawn but be drawn out in thanksgiving and praise for who he is, for his greatness, for his glory.

And this is where David begins. He begins with just occupation with the Lord himself. But, when you come to verse two, he gets taken up with what the Lord has done for him.

First of all, with the Lord himself, and now with the blessings that the Lord has bestowed upon him. So, it's nice to be taken up with him, and the more you're taken up with him, beloved, then you begin to think of what he has done for you. Forget not all his benefits.

Have you noticed the little word all in this section? Some five times or more, the little word all is used. All that is within me, all his benefits, all thine iniquities, all thy diseases, all. He doesn't want to miss one of the Lord's benefits.

It takes time, just the thinking for him. Forget not all his benefits. My, that's a tall oash.

That is a tall oash. When I think of these benefits, and coming from Ottawa, I suppose I think of a government town with many, many civil servants, and in talking to them, I'm rather amazed at the time of all the benefits they have. All the benefits.

So, they have their job, they have their salary, but then there are a lot of benefits that go along with it. You join up in a company, and they say, now this is going to be your salary, but along with your salary, a lot of hidden benefits. I'd like to point them out to you.

I'd like to point out all those hidden benefits. Perhaps it's your holidays, fully paid for, all of their extra holidays paid for, your hospitalizations all looked after, and so on and on it goes, and you begin to count up all the benefits. You say, this is not only a good job, it's got tremendous benefits.

Well, you see, when you come to Christ, when you're introduced to him, you're taken up with himself, and the glories, and the greatness of the Lord, and his love, and his grace towards you, and his mercy. And then, lo and behold, when you put your trust in him, when you're born again, to your amazement, you find that there are so many benefits to this Christian life. So many of them.

And he says, forget not all his benefits. Forget not all his benefits. There are so many things that accompany the salvation into which we're brought in.

If I'm speaking to someone here this morning, and you're sitting here, maybe you're a son or a daughter of someone who's here, and you've never accepted Christ as Savior, you know the gospel, you've heard it again and again, you've been brought up listening to the gospel, but you've never accepted Christ. Beloved, you are losing out terribly. In our camp work, I find that many boys and girls and young people shy away from trusting in Christ, because they feel if they do, they'll have to give up certain things.

Happiness must go out the window. The idea of happiness, and belonging to the Lord, and living for the Lord, they cannot reconcile and put together. What a lie of the evil one.

Notice David's comments here. Have you noticed again the little word, who? Five times it's used here. Verse three, who? Who? Verse four, twice over again, and in verse five, who? Satisfy thy mouth with good things.

So, just think of that, shall we? Just for a moment. Five wonderful who's. Five wonderful verbs involved here, as well.

We have the verb forgive, heal, redeem, crown, satisfy. My, that's tremendous. Even just reading that over kind of excites you, does it not? I hope it does.

Look at the first on David's list. May you just think about this for a moment, beloved. If I were to go around here this morning, which I'm not going to do, and give each one a slip of paper, and then say, now I'd like you to just write down some of the Lord's blessings to you, some of his benefits.

I wonder what you would put across the list. What would be the very first thing that would come to your mind? Well, it's interesting to notice the first thing that came to David's mind. There he is, making out his little list as he writes down.

He says, Lord, I want to praise you in all that's within me, and I want to praise you for all your benefits. Number one, number one, who forgiveth all thy sins. Now, beloved, that cannot be taken away from the believer.

There is something that is eternal for us to lay hold of, who forgiveth all thy sins. By the way, do you know that your sins are forgiven? Can you say from your heart, I praise the Lord this morning my sins have been forgiven? A young girl went to the Sunday school, and a teacher claimed the way of salvation, and after a few weeks she made a commitment, and she sat down on her knees, and she accepted Christ as Savior. A few weeks later, she took sick, and she was quite sick for a number of weeks, and Satan began to undermine her thinking, and she was beginning to wonder if all her sins were forgiven.

She asked her sister. She came in to see her one afternoon. She said, when you get the Bible out, it says there's a verse that the teacher told me about.

They said, I think it's in first John. She opened up to first John. I think it's in chapter one, and they began to read through chapter one, and finally they came to the verse.

The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin. She said, that's it! She says, I couldn't remember whether it said the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from sin, or whether it says cleanseth from all sin. She said, I thought maybe some of the sins were still there, but the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses from all sin.

Oh, so David said, I want to put that right on the top of my list. I want to praise him for that. I want to thank him for it.

For all eternity, we'll be praising him for that. Secondly, we healeth all thy diseases. Now, I know the Lord is able to heal physically.

But it seems to me primarily what the psalmist has in mind here, he's calling upon his soul. To praise the Lord, O my soul, and all within me. And David is going through his experience with the Lord in a spiritual way.

He, having said that all his sins were forgiven, having seen himself as a criminal before the bar, condemned, and then the pardon given to him. And now he begins to see himself in the hospital, and from the sole of his foot to the top of his head are wounds and purifying sores. He sees that he has a disease called sin.

It's affected his mind, it's affected his walk, it's affected him in every way. He's spiritually blind, he's spiritually lame, he's spiritually dead. It is come to the Lord that he's healed all my disease.

You see, beloved, when you come to Christ, he enables you to walk by his power and his grace, pleasing to him. You can't do that without him. When you come to him, those blind eyes are open, and if you begin to see things, the word of God begins to open up to you.

Some of the glories of Christ begin to be revealed to you, and your eyes are open. He heals those blind eyes. The mind which has been blinded by Satan is now open.

You find the light here. Number three, who redeemed my life from destruction? He sees himself as one who's like a slave in the slave market. He said, as a criminal I needed divine forgiveness, I've received it.

As a hospital patient, I needed a divine physician to heal me, I've found him. As a slave, a slave to sin in the slave market, he said, I needed someone to redeem me, someone to buy me out of the slave market, buy me back to myself, to himself. And he said, the Lord has done that.

Why, he could say, my redeemer! Oh, what beauties in that lovely name appear! And then, number four, he says, who satisfieth thy mouth, or who crowneth thee with kindness and tender mercy? Well, that's kind of exciting to me, because, you see, I think of the fact that my sins were forgiven. I remember that time in my own life many years ago. I remember that divine healing that the Lord graciously had upon me, and I remember the being redeemed, and how wonderful it was.

But then I found that after I was redeemed, that was only the beginning. He began to crown me, he began to pour out his blessings upon me, his loving kindness and tender mercy. They were new every morning.

This Christian life brought me into a situation where I could lean upon him, and his word was there to comfort and to strengthen me, and his presence was there before. He just kept crowning, crowning me, daily loading with his benefits. Beloved, each day when you arise, you can stop in your thoughts and think of the many benefits of the Lord's kindness.

Oh, we need to be up praising people. We'll stop there. Time is gone, but I want to go on with this song this evening, because it just gets better and better.

As the Christian life does as you go on, but I hope that you're a thankful people this morning. We have a merciful God. Are we a thankful people? Shall we pray? Gracious Father, how we thank thee this morning for thy mercies, thy mercies which are new indeed every morning.

We thank thee, Father, that thy mercies are everlasting, that thou art indeed a merciful and gracious God. We thank thee above all for this great salvation, for the forgiveness of sin, and we praise thee for crowning us with thy loving kindness and tender mercy. Lord, make us a thankful people.

May our lives bring forth glory to thy name. For this we pray, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

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