

Psalm 103: Bless the Lord

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon emphasizes the importance of blessing the Lord and remembering His benefits, and highlights God's loving kindness and tender mercy as the source of our soul's satisfaction.

Scripture: Exodus 34:6-7, Psalm 19:1-4, Psalm 100:3, Psalm 103:2-5, Psalm 103:10-12, Psalm 103:17-18

Topics: "Worship And Praise", "Gods Sovereignty"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on Psalm 103 and its message of praising and worshiping God. The psalm is divided into three parts. The first part, from verse 1 to 5, highlights the personal blessings David received from God. The second part, from verse 6 to 19, emphasizes the greatness of God's creation and the perfection of His law. The final part, from verse 20 to 22, calls upon the entire universe to join in blessing the Lord. The speaker emphasizes that God is the source of all blessings and that it is through His grace and love that His people can respond by fearing Him, loving Him, and keeping His commandments.

Transcript

I would like to read with you a psalm. Psalm 103. Psalm 103.

A psalm of David. Bless Jehovah, O my soul, and all that is within me. Bless his holy name.

Bless Jehovah, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Who forgiveth all thy iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from the pit, who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies, who satisfies thine old age with good things, thy youth is renewed like the eagles. Jehovah executed righteousness and justice for all that are oppressed.

He made known his ways unto Moses, his ex, unto the children of Israel. Jehovah is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness. He will not always chide, neither will He keep His anger forever.

He hath not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His loving kindness towards them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.

As a father pitieth his children, so Jehovah pitieth them that fear Him. For Himself knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass, as a flower of the field, so he flourishes.

For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof knoweth it no more. But the loving kindness of Jehovah is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him and His righteousness unto children's children, to such as keep His covenant and to those that remember His precepts to do them. Jehovah has established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all.

Bless Jehovah, ye His angels, mighty in strength, that execute His word, hearkening unto the voice of His word. Bless Jehovah, all ye His hosts, ye ministers of His that do His will. Bless Jehovah, all His works, in all places of His dominion.

Bless Jehovah, O my soul. May we look to the Lord. Our Heavenly Father, how we praise and thank Thee that we can come together to remember Thy Son.

We thank Thee for giving Thy Son, our Lord Jesus, to us. We thank Thee for what He has done on Calvary's cross. We are what we are today.

It is all because of Thy loving kindness and tender mercy that Thou hast shown us in Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Father, we do ask Thee that Thou would touch the very cord of our heart this morning, that from the very depths of our being there may be worship, may be adoration, may be praises and thanksgiving rising unto Thee, because Thou alone art worthy. We commit this time into Thy hands, and may Thy Holy Spirit move among us.

In the name of our Lord Jesus, amen. We are approaching the end of the year 1981, and I think it is very appropriate that at this time we should recollect, we should count the blessings that God has given us through the year, and we should learn to praise and to worship Him. Psalm 103 was written by David, the man after God's own heart, the sweet singer of Israel.

As he was touched by the loving kindness and tender mercies of God, he expressed his heart through this psalm, and by this psalm he intends to teach us how to sing praises unto God. Now this psalm can be divided into three parts. The first part is from verse one through verse five.

David sings all the poems of God and all the personal mercies which he received from God. The second part is from verse six through verse nineteen. David thinks of what God has done to his own children, the people of Israel, from the time he delivered them out of Egypt up to the time when he established his kingdom among them.

And then the third part is from verse twenty through verse twenty-two. He calls upon the whole universe to join with him in blessing the Lord. Now this psalm starts with, Bless Jehovah, O my soul.

Now when we come to this word, bless, now we know that ordinarily it is the better who blesses the inferior. In Hebrews we are told that this is something that is very sure and certain. The inferior is blessed by the better.

In other words, God is the one who blesses us. He is the God of all blessings. He is the source of all good gifts.

Every good gift and every good thing comes from God. He gives everything. He blesses us with everything.

He gives us everything. He is the one who can bless. Now who are we that we should bless God? That is to say, how can we bless God? Is there anything we can give to God? Is there anything that God is lacking, that He needs us to give to Him, to bless Him? So in one sense, only God can bless.

We cannot bless God. But there is another sense of the word bless. And it is in that other sense that we are able to bless the Lord.

By blessing the Lord it simply means that with ardent affection we acknowledge His worth. We come to render to Him the praises and the worship that is His due. And that is the way to bless the Lord.

To bless the Lord does not mean that we are able to give something to Him. To bless the Lord simply means we acknowledge who He is. We realize His worth.

And with heart, love and adoration we come to pour out to Him our gratitude and our thanksgiving. That is blessing the Lord. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

It is as if David is calling his soul to bless the Lord. Deep down in David's spirit he senses the loving kindness of God. In his spirit he is stirred by God's love.

So he called his soul to join with him to bless the Lord. His spirit wants to find expression through his soul. Now, brothers and sisters, in blessing the Lord it has to begin with our spirit.

It is not something just external. It is not just a form or a ritual. It has to begin in our spirit.

There in our spirit we are constrained by the love of God. God is spirit. We must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

It has to begin deep down in our spirit. And it is in our spirit we see Him. In our spirit we sense His goodness to us.

And because our spirit is so filled with Him, we call our soul to join with us and also to be the means to express what is within our spirit. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Sometimes our soul is slow and dull.

Sometimes it is slow in joining with our spirit. And that is the reason why sometimes we have to call our soul to rise up, to awake, to join with our spirit, to praise the Lord. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

And all that is within me, bless His holy name. All that is within me literally means all my insides, all my inner parts. Now what are my inner parts? What are the functions of my soul? The functions of my soul are my will.

O that my will will rise up to will to bless the Lord. The function of my soul is my mind, that I may think of what He has done for me. I may recall, I may remember.

The function of our soul is our emotion, that my love may rise within me to love the Lord. In other words, He is calling all His insides, everything that is within me, everything that is within Him, to join together to bless the Lord. You know, sometimes we find that we are divided.

We are not united. Sometimes we find that our spirit wants to praise the Lord, and yet our soul seems to be asleep. Sometimes you find that our will wants to praise the Lord, but our memory doesn't work.

Sometimes we may remember, but our emotion doesn't join in. We find that we are torn apart in our inner beings, and that's the reason why in psalms sometimes you find, unite, unite all that is within me to praise the Lord. Our whole being will go out to bless the Lord.

Not one part left behind. Whether it is my emotion, whether it is my mind, my intellect, or whether it is my volition, my will, or whether it is my conscience, you find that my whole being joined in one to bless the Lord, because He is worthy. All that is within me, bless His holy name.

Bless His name. Why? Because His name reveals Him. We do not know Him, but by His name.

You remember even Moses. When God appeared to him in that burning bush, God said, Now what is your name? That I may tell the people. It is through the name of our God that we know Him.

Name represents that person. Name reveals His character. In the Bible you'll find God has many names.

As a matter of fact, God's names are innumerable. He is not only Elishim, the Creator. He is Jehovah, the covenant God.

He is the same. The same yesterday, today and forever. He is the rock upon which we stand and we are built.

He is everything. His name. His name reveals His love to us.

His name reveals His righteousness. His name reveals that He is light. He is mighty, almighty.

He is heavenly. But above all, He said, All that is within me, bless His holy name. In other words, you'll find it is His holiness that seems to sum up what He is.

Now, brothers and sisters, what is holy? What is the opposite of holy? You know, sometimes we do not know something but by its opposite. We do not know what righteousness is, but by its opposite see. And what is holy? The opposite of holy is common.

And our God is not common. Our God is different. Our God is unique.

Our God is the only one. There is no one like Him. Whether you think of love, there is no one who loves like God.

His love is holy love. If you think of righteousness, there is no one righteous as God. His righteousness is holy, is unique.

Everything about our God is holy, is separated from all. He is the only one. There is no one else like Him.

And because He is such a God, how can we refrain from blessing Him? Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. And you notice, the farmers here begin His blessing by blessing the Lord Himself. It is only in the next verse you'll find, Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.

In other words, in blessing the Lord, it is to bless the Lord Himself. Now of course we bless the Lord for all His benefits, that's true. But remember, that His benefits is not the ultimate.

These benefits may bring us to Him, but it is He Himself that we must focus upon. So, bless the Lord. It is more than what He has done for us.

It is what He is in Himself. That is the highest praise that we can give to Him. When we are thanking Him for all that He has done for us, now that's good.

But when we are praising Him for what He is, that's even better. Now often times we are so degenerated, that it seems as if we cannot rise above what we receive. In other words, even in our blessing the Lord, our blessing the Lord only reaches the low level of what we have received.

We cannot rise above ourselves and bless the Lord for what He is. And dear brothers and sisters, this is the highest praise that we must learn. We must rise above ourselves.

We must ascend to heaven. We must see Him, and in seeing Him, we will bless Him. Bless Him for what He is.

This is the highest praise. But of course it doesn't mean that we do not experience all His benefits. So here in the second verse you find, bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.

You know, brothers and sisters, our memory often plays trick on us. We remember what we should not remember and we forget what we should remember. And because of this we are exhorted.

We are exhorted not to forget all His benefits. You know, the strange thing is, we always remember something bad, but we forget everything that is good towards us. Not only this is true in our relationship with human beings.

Probably our parents throughout their life, they have given us so many benefits, innumerable, unaccountable, and probably you don't remember any of this, but you remember one day when your father or your mother did something to you, or spanked you, or something like that, and you could not forget that. All the good that was done was forgotten, but only the bad you remember. And how true it is in our relationship with God, that we forget all His goodness, but we remember only when we are disciplined by Him.

Forget not all His benefits. Do remember them. Do not forget.

And you know the word benefits, in the original, it is not exactly the word benefit that as we understand today. You know, the word benefit that we understand today is anything that benefits me, that give me something, some advantage. That's a benefit.

But actually the word in the original means dealings, treatments. Forget not all His treatments. Forget not all His dealings with you.

Now sometimes His dealings may be very painful, and other times His dealings may be very joyful. But whatever they may be, it is God's dealings with us. It is God who treats us.

He treats us like His own children. Now do not forget all His treatments. Do not forget all His dealings with you.

Why? Because if we remember all His dealings, we will be wise. If we forget His dealings, then we will be foolish. In other words, He has to deal with us on the same point again and again and again, because we

don't remember and we don't learn.

But if we do not forget His dealings, dear brothers and sisters, probably many lessons, you need only to be treated once, and you learn. Do not forget all His treatments. All His dealings are good for your soul.

And if you remember them, that will make you wise. And then the psalmist began to point out a few of the dealings or the treatments of God to him personally. Number one, he said, forgiving all thine iniquities.

Oh, when David blessed the Lord for the forgiving of all his iniquities, I can feel with him how deeply he is grateful to God. David is not perfect. Even though David is a man after God's own heart, he does have a heart for God, and yet he is not perfect.

We find that he has sinned terribly. He has sinned, and yet God forgave all his iniquities. David could never raise his head if his iniquities were not forgiven.

From a human standpoint, time and again we will say, David, you are finished. You are a person so close to God, and yet you fall so terribly. You are finished.

Surely God would have nothing to do with you anymore. And maybe in David's heart he feels the same thing. And yet, thank God, God forgave all his iniquities.

If you read his songs, like Psalm 51, the penitent song, and the other songs, he said, my sins, are like a heavy load that is above my head. He said, I was born in sin, raised in iniquities, and yet God forgave all his iniquities. Now, is it not something to bless the Lord with, who healeth all my diseases? David was under the discipline of God.

And if you read Psalm 32, he said, my bones cry out. Oh, because of his sin, he was disciplined. And he was in great trouble.

But he said, God healeth all my diseases. You know the word diseases here is a very special word. It means more than sickness.

If you want to translate that word, probably that word should be translated calamities. He heals all my calamities. Because of his iniquities, calamities after calamities come upon him.

But God forgave his iniquities and healed his calamities. Take away the cause and also remove the effect. How complete is God's salvation, who redeemed my life from the pit.

Now he goes even deeper, even deeper than just having his iniquities forgiven. But David said, Lord, you deliver me out of the pit, out of destruction, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. And in order that such deliverance is possible, what a price God has paid.

Redeem us from destruction. You know redemption is not a cheap thing. To redeem you have to pay a cost.

And to redeem a soul from destruction, God has to pay with his only begotten son. He spared not his son in order to redeem us out of the curse of the law and out of destruction. What mercy! Who crowned thee with loving kindness and tender mercy, not only negatively redeeming us out of destruction, but positively he crowns us with loving kindness and tender mercy.

Loving kindness and tender mercy are like a crown to be put upon us. Now brothers and sisters remember you do not earn that crown. You are not crowned because of your merits.

You are crowned because of His grace. He has crowned you with loving kindness and tender mercies. I love the word loving kindness.

Now kindness is good enough, but loving kindness is better. When you show kindness, show it in love. When a beggar is begging for money, you throw a penny to him.

That is kindness. But is it loving kindness? Tender mercies. When you show mercy to people, is it a tender mercy? Or when you show mercy it is cruel.

But God crowns us with tender mercies. Or when He shows mercy to us. Now what is mercy? The difference between grace and mercy is, grace the emphasis is on the giver, mercy the emphasis on the recipient.

In other words, grace shows us the graciousness of the giver, the generosity of the giver. But mercy shows the undeservedness of the recipient of grace. We are undeserved, unworthy.

And yet God gave grace to us, that is mercy. But when God does it, He does it with tender mercy. Loving kindness and tender mercy.

Even when He shows mercy, we don't deserve it. And it is very tender. Oh, He is so sympathetic.

He is not in a sense arrogant. All right, I will show you mercy. I will forgive you.

No. He is begging us to receive His mercy. That is tender mercy and loving kindness.

He crowns us. He puts us in that high position, elevated position with tender mercies and loving kindness. Who satisfies thine old age with good things There is only one who can satisfy our soul.

God is the only one who can satisfy our soul. The whole world cannot satisfy your soul. You remember that famous saying of St. Augustine? After he was saved, in his confession he said, Oh God, my soul is not satisfied.

My soul is made for You. And I will not find rest until I rest in Thee. God is the only one who can satisfy our soul.

Yes, He satisfies us with many good things, but all these good things speak of Him. He is the only one who can satisfy us. And here you will find satisfied thine old age with good things.

Now probably David wrote this song when he was old. But you know the word old, age, can be translated in many different ways. And probably in your version you will find a different translation.

The word in the original can mean ornament, decoration, can mean glory, honor, it can mean mouth, or age, it can mean different things. And sometimes you use the word soul. Satisfy my soul with good things.

In other words, whatever your condition may be, whatever your age may be, or whatever your needs may be, you will find God is able to satisfy you. And you are so satisfied that your soul, your youth is renewed like the eagles. Now there is a kind of tradition, traditional saying that an eagle renews its youth from time to time.

Actually it points to its moulting. You know, from time to time you will find an eagle will moult. In other words, all his feathers will change.

And in changing his feathers, it makes him look like young again. You know, the moulting of an eagle. And probably there is an idea behind it.

In other words, when our soul is satisfied with God, then we are renewed like youth. In other words, we are never old. No matter how aged you are, how old you are, you are never old.

You are always young, eternal youth, because you are renewed as the eagle. How good that is! When David thinks of all the goodnesses that God has given to him, that God forgives his iniquity, heals his diseases, redeems his soul, crown him with loving kindness, satisfy him with good things, that his youth is renewed as the eagle. When David thinks of these things, now how can he not bless the Lord? His heart is just overflowing.

Dear brothers and sisters, oftentimes we find it very hard to bless the Lord. Why? Because we have forgotten. If only we remember, if only we can recall, if only the Holy Spirit would touch our memory, if only the Holy Spirit would touch our memory, and bring all the dealings of God back to us.

Dear brothers and sisters, even one single dealing would open the foot gate of our soul, that we may pour forth praises and thanksgiving unto Him. How good is our God! But David's blessing God does not stop here, and it should not. From the personal point of view, he is carried on to the corporate.

David is a king. A king cannot always be personal. A king always carries with him the kingdom, his people.

And therefore you'll find when David begins to bless the Lord, of course he begins with the personal mercy of God. The personal mercy that he had experienced. Now that's where we must begin.

In other words, whenever we come to bless the Lord, whenever we begin to bless the Lord, it has to begin with what we have experienced of Him, what we know of Him. It has to be personal. It cannot be impersonal.

We have to be involved. Now that's where it must begin. But, brothers and sisters, as David is king, therefore he has to continue on with his people.

We are members of the body of Christ. Therefore our praises cannot just be limited to the personal area. It has to be enlarged and include all the body of Christ.

What's on my heart is just one verse, the last verse of Psalm 19. But I feel I should read the whole Psalm. Psalm 19.

To the chief musician, a Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the expanse showeth the work of His hands. Day unto day utter a speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.

There is no speech, and there are no words, but their voice is heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their language to the extremity of the world. In them has He set a tent for the sun, and He is as a bridegroom going forth from His chamber.

He rejoices as a strong man to run the race. His going forth is from the end of the heavens, and His circuit unto the ends of it, and there is nothing hid from the keep thereof. The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring

the soul.

The testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of Jehovah are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring forever. The judgments of Jehovah are truth. They are righteous altogether.

They are more precious than gold, yea, than much fine gold, and sweeter than honey and the dropping of the honeycomb. Moreover by them is their servant enlightened. In keeping them there is great reward.

Who understandeth His errors, purify me from secret faults. Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous things. Let them not have dominion over me.

Then shall I be perfect, and I shall be innocent from great transgressions. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Jehovah, my Rock and my Redeemer. As we come together to pray, we are not just coming together to say prayers, we are not coming together just to go through religious exercise, but as we come together to pray, we do expect our prayers to be acceptable in the sight of God.

In other words, prayers are offered with the idea that they are being accepted by God. We do not want just to pray without expecting our prayers be acceptable to God. We do not just come to pray, do not expect that God will accept our prayer and answer our prayer.

But how can our prayer really be acceptable in God's sight? How can it be acceptable? Now I think in prayer, actually you find it involves two things, our mouth and our heart. The words of our mouth and the meditation of our heart. Prayer does not involve only our mouth, it involves also our heart.

If we pray with words, our heart, our words are just very superficial. So for our prayers to be acceptable in God's sight, we need to be careful about two things, the words of our mouth and also the meditations of our heart. Now on the one hand, we know that we should not be too careful about the words of our mouth, because if we are overly careful, we are composing our prayer.

And prayer is not a composition. You know, sometimes we dare not pray because we are afraid that the words of our mouth are not good enough, is not a good composition. Sometimes we are afraid and actually when we have that kind of fear, it is actually we have people in view and not God in view.

In other words, God is not expecting us to compose a good prayer. If you want to have good prayer, composed prayer, read a prayer book and you'll find these prayers are very well composed and much better than what we can do. But of course, you know, we know God is not looking for composition.

When we are thinking too much of composition, it is actually the fear of man. Or we want people to think that our prayers are beautiful, you know, and that's really out of order, you know. We shouldn't be overly careful about the words of our mouth.

Yet on the other hand, the words of our mouth are important. Because if you read the scripture, you'll find that sometimes a word misused make that prayer unacceptable. For instance, that Phoenician woman, the Syro-Phoenician woman, you know, when she addressed the Lord as son of David, she was not heard.

Until you say Lord. So words are important. Why? Because words represent our understanding.

Out of the fullness of the heart comes our words. So on the one hand, in prayer, let us not be overly careful about words, trying to compose. But on the other hand, our words are important.

I mean, you just cannot be just careless, you know, just be very careless in what you say to the Lord. Not only we have to say in a humble way, but we have to be careful not to be, you know, saying the wrong things. That's important.

But I think even more important than the words of our mouth is the meditation of our heart. God looks upon our heart. And if our heart is not in it, no matter how many words we utter, how beautiful our words are, they will not be acceptable.

In prayer, our heart must be in it. And here you notice is the meditation of our heart. In other words, our heart meditates.

Modern life is such that meditation is a lost art. People do not meditate. People are always rushing here and there, you know.

They do not stop. They do not think. They do not ponder.

They do not meditate. For our prayers to be really acceptable before the Lord, I believe that meditation is very important. Meditation is not only important in reading the scripture.

It is important in prayer. Why? Because things that you have not meditated prove that your heart is not there. If your heart is really there, you will think and think and think over it.

You know, like Mary in the scripture you'll find. When Mary heard something that she didn't understand, she didn't just let the words pass, but she kept in her heart and pondered over it. That's meditation.

Now sometimes, you know, we may offer a prayer, but how deep is your heart in it is measured by your meditation. We may mention a subject for prayer and you pray for it, but you have never thought about it. You have never pondered before the Lord about the situation.

And that kind of prayer is very shallow. But things that you have really pondered before the Lord, when you pray, you will find that it has a depth there. It reveals that your heart is really in it.

It makes your prayer weighty, with weight, not just floating around, you know. So to have our prayers acceptable, our prayers have to be real. To have our prayers and what makes our prayer real is the combination of these two things.

The words of our mouth and the meditation of our heart. Turn it around. Sometimes we may meditate a lot, but we never put it in words.

And the result is we are always vague. Words crystallize our thought. You know.

So if we meditate a lot and yet there are no words of our mouth, we do not utter them, you will find your thoughts are confused, vague. But when you are able to put it into words, then it crystallizes, precipitates your thought. So if we meditate a lot, we try to utter them in words, you know, so that it becomes very solid, very substantial.

And that makes our prayer real too. So to have a real prayer, to me I feel, is a combination of these two things. The meditation of our heart plus the words of our mouth.

And the prayer of our heart. And if you are lacking in either, you will find something is missing. So as we pray, you know, I think probably you will discover yourself things that you have really pondered before the Lord.

When you take these things up in prayer, you find your heart is really involved. You know. Often times you find the difficulty is you do not find the right word to utter the meditation of your heart.

And that's where we need to look to the Lord to give us the right word for it. You know the right word is not only important when we are preaching, the right word is important when we are praying too. It does have its effect.

You know, so let's look to the Lord. On the one hand that He was so stirred our hearts, that our heart may not be just careless and insensitive, but our hearts will really be able to take up burdens. And really be able to ponder over things that the Lord has brought into our attention.

And as we ponder over these things, let's try to ask the Holy Spirit to give us the right word to express it in prayer. You know sometimes when we are praying and you find that it doesn't hit the target. A few prayers may be prayed over the same thing, but somehow you find that it doesn't hit.

But until someone may just pray and suddenly a word is uttered and it hits. You know that it hits the target and you know God has heard. So let's learn this before the Lord.

Of course it needs practice and we have to learn, but we thank God the Holy Spirit is with us. So He will teach us how to make our prayers really acceptable with the words of our mouth and the meditation of our hearts. Anish away so quickly.

Slow to anger. Abundant in loving kindness. God is still willing to go with His people.

God is still willing to take them as His inheritance. God will still make a covenant with them. Now think of that.

Think of what happened during those 38 years of wandering in the wilderness. They tempted Him ten times. They did not believe in Him and yet David said He will not always chide.

Sometimes He will chide, yes. Sometimes He has to. He has to discipline.

But He will not always chide. Neither will He skip His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

If God should deal with us according to our sins, we will all be long ago consumed. Think of the children of Israel. They should long ago be destroyed completely.

But God has not dealt with them according to their sins. As the heavens are high above the earth, so great is the loving kindness towards them that fear Him. As the east is from the west so far has He removed our transgressions for us.

You know there is no measurement from the east to the west. We can measure from the north to the south because the north pole and the south pole. But we are not able to measure the east from the west because when you go west you arrive at east and when you go east you get to west.

So there is no limit. And God has thrown our sins away. In other words, God has completely forgiven us.

What mercy! What love! The forty years in the wilderness, and you will find this is our God. This is the way that God dealt with His people. Well, that is the second stage.

And then you enter the third stage from verse thirteen to verse nineteen. And that speaks of how God let them into the promised land. God let them in not because they kept the law.

They did not enter the promised land under the Sinaitic covenant of law. They entered the promised land under a new covenant, Moabitic covenant. You know before they enter into the promised land, as you read Deuteronomy, you find in Deuteronomy Moses in the plan of Moab spoke to the children of Israel and God made a covenant with them there.

In addition to the covenant He made with them at Mount Sinai. In other words, it is a covenant of mercy. God made a covenant of mercy with them, but that mercy is coupled with obedience.

In other words, God will lead them in under mercy as a father had compassion upon his children. They are not worthy, but as a father who has compassion upon the children, He will lead them into the promised land and give them the promised land. He knows their frame.

They are but dust. He knows them. They are just like grass, like flowers.

They are tears and is gone. But God's loving kindness is towards them. And His loving kindness is from everlasting to everlasting.

If they obey, if they fear God, if they keep the law, if they keep His covenant, if they do His precepts, then they will remain in that land forever. And the blessing of the Lord will be upon them forever. God will establish His kingdom in their midst.

And through them God will rule over all. And you know, during the time of David, it was partially fulfilled. That is the tender mercies of God.

Dear brothers and sisters, as we think of the church of God, as we think of God's people today, is it not a repeat of what we find here? Out of bondage of sin, God has delivered us. Out of bondage of sin, He has done so much to us. But do we know His ways? Are we so ignorant that we only know His acts? He has to show His hand again and again and again, and we never understand His mind? Are we so ignorant that we do not know where His heart is? And because we are so ignorant, how we rebel against Him, how we fail Him, how we fail His testimony again and again and again? But God does not deal with us according to our sins.

We are here today. It is because He does not deal with us according to our sins. Yes, sometimes He has to discipline us as a father chastens His children.

But the purpose is to mature us, that we may be made partakers of His divine nature. Oh, if only we fear Him! And you know, in the New Testament, the word fear has a deeper connotation, and that is godly fear. Godly fear means loving fear.

We fear Him because we love Him. We love Him so we fear Him. Oh, if only we love Him, we fear Him.

If only we keep His covenant. It is not the old covenant of law, it is the new covenant of grace. The yoke is easy, the burden is light, it is grace.

If only we keep His commandments. His commandments are not burdensome. Love one another as I have loved you.

Brothers and sisters, if we only, by His grace, will respond and will fear Him and love Him and keep His commandments and keep His covenant, He said, His ten mercies is from everlasting to everlasting. He will establish His kingdom in the midst of His people, and His rule shall be over all. Now this is what God is doing today.

He knows our frame, how weak we are. We are but dust. Today we are here, tomorrow we are gone.

But thank God, what His loving kindness has done in us lasts forever. We have received a kingdom that is indestructible. This is the tender mercies and loving kindness of our God.

Not only to you personally, but to us as a people. And if this is the case, what shall we do? You find you have to continue on, and David continue on, and in the third part, verse 20 through verse 22, he calls the whole universe to join him in blessing the Lord. And that's what it should be.

First David, then the children of Israel, then the whole universe. Bless Jehovah, ye His angels, mighty in strength, that execute His word, hearken unto the voice of His word. He calls upon the celestial angels, the celestial beings, to bless the Lord.

These celestial beings are mighty in strength. They are mighty in strength, for what? To execute the word of God. That is the work of the angels.

The angels are to carry out the word of God. And they are mighty in carrying God's word out. And they should bless the Lord.

Then he calls upon, bless the Lord, all His hosts, ye ministers of His that do His will. I think that His hosts here means all the created beings. The whole creation is created for His good pleasure, for His will.

The whole creation is created to do His will, even though today you find the whole creation is mourning, is under bondage, under corruption, and yet it is the will of God that the whole creation, all the hosts will do His will. And one day it will. So he calls the whole creation, all the creatures, celestial and terrestrial, to praise the Lord.

And then he says, bless the Lord all His works in all places of His dominion. All the works of God in all His dominion will praise Him. Not only the living beings, but even the mountains, the hills, and the trees, and the birds, and everything, everything will bless the Lord.

And he concludes with, bless the Lord, O my soul. That is the way to bless the Lord. Dear brothers and sisters, may we end this year with the right spirit of thanksgiving unto the Lord.

Shall we pray? Our Heavenly Father, our hearts are warmed with the loving kindness and tender mercies that Thou has shown us individually and corporately. We do want to bless Thy name, Thy holy name. Thou art unique.

Thou art the only one. There is none else. And every good thing and good gift comes from Thee.

There is no shade or shadow nor tourney with Thee. Thou art the same yesterday, today and forever. O how we praise and thank Thee that we are Thy people, the sheep of Thy pastures.

It is but right for us to come to Thee to bless Thy name. O may the whole universe break forth in praising Thee. Praises belong to Thee.

Amen.

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