

PSALM 103: Our Great Big God of compassion

Big Idea: Our great big God is compassionate to us, and faithfully loves us despite who we are.

Pray

What a great evening. We really should do this more often. In our crazy busy lives we very rarely slow down and praise God.

I hope tonight has been refreshing? It certainly has for me. We have sung some great songs to our God.

What makes them great is that they are all true, they teach us about our great big God. His grace, his bigness, his mercy.

The fact that he is God with us and one day we will be with him for all eternity. All true.

All great encouragements to us all. As I said at the start we very rarely give God the awe and praise he deserves.

Our God is so great. Our God is so big. Our God is awesome. Our God made us, he made our world.

Our God wants a relationship with us. Our God seeks us in our lost and broken state and provides rescue for us.

It always brings me joy when I wake up in the morning spontaneously singing to God. Waking up with a song on my heart, singing praises to my God makes me very happy.

Considering who he is and all that he has done for us, we should constantly be singing his praises. Our God is incredible.

Our Psalm tonight is exactly that. David writes this Psalm calling us to bless God. We see that in v1. Have a look with me...

Of David.

**¹ My soul, bless the LORD,
and all that is within me, bless his holy name.**

David calls for his soul and all that is in him to bless God, to bless God's holy name.

Bless in this context is praise. David wants to praise God with everything he has. David wants to praise God's name because God's name is above all others.

God's name deserves praise. God's holy set apart name deserves all our energy and being. God alone is worthy of our full hearted praise.

As David continues he gives us three reasons why we should bless God. Firstly we are to...

1. Bless the LORD for his benefits

Have a look again at v2-5 with me...

**² My soul, bless the LORD,
and do not forget all his benefits.**

**³ He forgives all your iniquity;
he heals all your diseases.**

**⁴ He redeems your life from the Pit;
he crowns you with faithful love and
compassion.**

**⁵ He satisfies you with good things;
your youth is renewed like the eagle.**

David's first motivation for us to bless God is all the benefits that come with knowing God. Knowing God personally means you know what he has done for you.

Knowing God benefits you in life it allows you to live life the best way. Life against God or without God is terrible and pointless.

Who better to help you through life than our good, loving creator? I love bread. I love the smell, I love the taste and I love the versatility.

I have never come across a bread type that I never liked. Thankfully Charissa's mom, shares the same love for bread.

But more than that she bakes bread. She even has little bread babies she feeds and grows to make more bread.

It's a great benefit to me that I know her and am close to her, because I get freshly baked bread to eat.

I also get homemade bread to take home regularly.

That's very exciting...but mainly only for me. David lists benefits of knowing God that are for all who listen and follow him.

Have a look with me...

V3 he forgives our sins and heals our diseases. God is bigger than our sins, he is bigger than our sicknesses.

V4 God redeems us from death and crowns us with faithful love and compassion. God is bigger than death.

We see that in Jesus. Jesus conquered death, Jesus is paid the price to redeem us from death.

Not only are we redeemed, we are also crowned with God's faithful love and compassion.

If you want to know what that looks like or means, read your Old Testament. You will see just how faithful God's love is to his people.

You will see how much compassion he has for his people. Even in the very dark and hopeless book of judges, God never stopped loving his people.

No one can love like God does. His love is relentless.

That's why David goes on to say that God satisfies us with good things and our youth is renewed like the eagles.

Knowing God helps us to be satisfied, to be content. That's a huge benefit. One we shouldn't take for granted.

Our world is continuously searching for fulfilment.

People are restless and lost and are looking for this feeling of satisfaction.

The only place to find true satisfaction is in God. When you have that even though you may feel old or actually be old, you will feel young.

Your youth will be renewed because you won't have the heavy burden of life and all its worries. You know God and therefore you will be satisfied.

Brothers and sisters doesn't this excite you? Doesn't this fill your heart with joy? Our great big God satisfies us and knowing him brings benefits.

David secondly tells us to...

2. Bless the LORD of grace

Follow with me as I read from v6...

⁶ The LORD executes acts of righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.⁷ He revealed his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel.

⁸ The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love.

⁹ He will not always accuse us or be angry forever.

¹⁰ He has not dealt with us as our sins deserve or repaid us according to our iniquities.

¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his faithful love toward those who fear him.

¹² As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

Aren't these some of the most comforting words you could ever hear? God will bring justice for all the oppressed.

Because our God is righteous.

God has an answer to corruption and injustices, he is not silent. God will act in righteousness and bring about justice for the oppressed.

Wow. Isn't that great news? Isn't that incredibly comforting to hear?

How can we know that God is able to achieve justice for us? He has a great track record. God showcased his righteous justice in his rescue of the Israelites.

The Israelites were oppressed in Egypt. They were forced to be slaves. They cried out to God for help.

Our great big God acted in righteous judgment on Pharaoh and the Egyptians to bring about justice for the people of Israel.

God is both willing and able to bring justice for his people. What's more is that God's justice is marked by his grace.

As we see in v8 onwards God is slow to anger, he is abounding in faithful love, he is compassionate and gracious.

He won't always accuse us or be angry with us. He hasn't dealt with us according to our sins.

What we see in the story of Israel is that they end up becoming just like the nations...perhaps even worse.

Yet God continues to love them, to love the remnant of faithful Israel who listen to him and obey his words.

The fact that Adam and Eve weren't killed instantly shows us that God is a God of grace.

No one would be here otherwise. We all fall short of God's standards and therefore we all deserve God's just punishment.

It's a difficult balance to have, one that doesn't make sense. How can God be just without us being punished as we deserved?

Remember one of our benefits in the previous point is that God has redeemed us from death.

Jesus Christ God's only Son, died for us, more than that Jesus took the punishment, God's wrath, onto himself for us.

We are justified through Jesus Christ. Which is the expression of God's love to us that David speaks about in v11-12.

As high as the heavens are above the earth.
Endless height is how much God loves those that
fear him.

That is those that listen and obey him rather than
themselves or other voices the world throws our
way.

As far as the East is from the West is how far God
has removed our sins. In Christ these images are
a reality.

Is your soul crying out to bless the LORD, is all
that within you wanting to bless the LORD yet?
Our great big God is full of grace.

As we move on we need to see thirdly that we
must...

3. Bless the LORD of compassion

Follow with me as I read from v13...

¹³ As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him. ¹⁴ For he knows what we are made of, remembering that we are dust. ¹⁵ As for man, his days are like grass— he blooms like a flower of the field; ¹⁶ when the wind passes over it, it vanishes, and its place is no longer known. ¹⁷ But from eternity to eternity the LORD's faithful love is toward those who fear him, and his righteousness toward the grandchildren ¹⁸ of those who keep his covenant, who remember to observe his precepts. ¹⁹ The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.

David says like a father has compassion on his children so God our heavenly father has compassion on us.

Good father's don't like to see their kids suffer or struggle, they do their best to prevent that.

God is the best Father, he doesn't wish us harm.

As God's children as those who fear God,
remember wisdom is the fear of the Lord, God
has shows us compassion.

As we saw last week our God is great and big, he
is eternal and all powerful. We are not.

David has a similar reflection to that of Moses.
God knows we are made of dust...he made us.

God knows how frail we are. God also knows
how limited we are by time. We are like grass,
here for a short time.

But here is the incredible truth...despite our
weakness, frailty and limitations God's faithful
love to us is eternal.

Have a look at v17...but from eternity to eternity
the Lord's faithful love is towards those who fear
him.

Amen. That is great news. Our great big God of
compassion loves us from before the world was
created and will continue to love us long after
this world has passed into eternity.

How special does that make you feel? I know I
feel incredibly great and privileged.

My great big God, who made me out of dust,
who made this breath taking creation loved me
before any of this existed.

I never had to do anything or prove myself...I
didn't even exist, and my great big God of
compassion loved me.

I am not even that great?

I haven't brought about world peace, I am not always a nice person. I often mess up and make mistakes...I am not always easy to love.

Yet my great big God loves me from eternity to eternity...amazing. If you fear him, if you obey him and listen him, it's the same for you.

Isn't God incredible...let's just pause and reflect on this point for a moment...let this soak in.

Then David concludes this section by reminding us that God's kingdom is in heaven and he rules over all.

Once again pointing out that God is bigger than us and his kingdom is forever and not limited like us or our earth.

Those of us who listen to God's good laws and obey him, we are part of this eternal kingdom.

You might think being at the Rugby world cup final with New Zealand vs the Springboks and the Springboks winning is the greatest feeling.

You may think going to see the most incredible sights our world has to offer, the northern lights or the Amazon rain forest is breath taking.

Just for uncle Billy, you may think seeing Liverpool come back from being three goals down in a final live is the most magical experience you could ever have.

You may think witnessing the miraculous birth of your child or watching your child grow up is just amazing.

You may find such beauty in order and structure or in the complexity of your coding that it leaves you on a real high as you see all you accomplished.

As great as all those things are, nothing compares to our great big God. Nothing compares to our eternity with him in his kingdom experiencing his compassion and faithful love for all eternity.

And so finally David concludes by saying...

4. Bless the LORD all of creation

**²⁰ Bless the LORD,
all his angels of great strength,
who do his word,
obedient to his command.**

**²¹ Bless the LORD, all his armies,
his servants who do his will.**

**²² Bless the LORD, all his works
in all the places where he rules.**

My soul, bless the LORD!

The great reminder this Psalm gives us is that we get to do some things now that we will do for all eternity.

David calls all of creation, angels, armies and all the rest to bless God to sing his praises. When we look at the last book of God's word what we see in his kingdom and around his throne is creation singing blessing to him.

That's what makes our gatherings special and that's what has made tonight extra special. Blessing God, singing praises to our great big God of compassion.

Invite the band up...

He alone deserves it he has done so much, let's stand as we sing his praises one last time tonight.

Bless the lord oh my soul, worship his holy name.