

LESSON 8
January 19, 2025

Unit II: Our God Reigns
Don't Forget!

DEVOTIONAL READING: Isaiah 66:1-14
BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Psalm 103
PRINT PASSAGE: Psalm 103:1-14

KEY VERSE

The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.
(Psalm 103:6, KJV)

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The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. (Psalm 103:6, NIV)

Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Identify the benefits that you have received from God's steadfast love and righteousness.
- Recognize yourself as forgiven and loved eternally by the Lord.
- Understand "remembering" as a call to action to promote the agenda of God's kingdom.

***Key Terms**

Acts (verse 7)—Hebrew: *alilah* (al-ee-law'): deeds; actions; "deeds" (NIV).

Benefits (verse 2)—Hebrew: *gemul* (ghem-ool'): dealings; recompense.

Bless (verse 1)—Hebrew: *barak* (baw-rak'): to kneel, favor; "praise" (NIV).

Heals (verse 3)—Hebrew: *rapha* (raw-faw'): becomes fresh; repairs; takes care; "healeth" (KJV).

Lovingkindness (verse 4)—Hebrew: *checed* (kheh'-sed): favor; goodness; kindness; "love and compassion" (NIV).

Righteousness (verse 6)—Hebrew: *tsedaqah* (tsed-aw-kaw'): honesty; justice; righteous deeds.

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)



The Biblical Context

The book of Psalms, often described as Israel's worship hymnal, is divided into five sections or books. Each book contains songs, prayers, and poems addressing various themes. Psalm 103 is part of the fourth book and, along with three others, focuses on praising and exalting the Lord. Many scholars attribute the authorship of Psalm 103 to David. The psalmist praised God for what He had done for him and how He blessed His chosen people, Israel. Thematically, the psalm can be divided into three sections. The first section (Psalm 103:1-5) opens with a personal "call to worship," as the writer summons entire inner being to bless God for all His unmerited benefits to him. The second section's focus (see Psalm 103:6-19) is God's benefits to Israel, emphasizing how God's love and righteousness extend to successive generations that obey Him. Verses 20-22 conclude the psalm by inviting angels and all that God created to join in praising the Lord for what He has done.

his inner being, to bless God for every blessing he received. All of us have experienced God's miracles and mercies in our lives. We should give more than gratitude for God's unwavering love for us and command our souls to praise Him for every blessing He bestows on us.

ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

Don't Forget Personal Blessings (*Psalm 103:1-5*)

KJV

BLESS THE LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

Introduction

As we age, forgetting is expected because our brain structure and function change over time. Other physiological factors that result in forgetting include the following:

- Reduced blood flow to the brain.
- The effects of certain medicines that we take.
- Some health conditions inadvertently impact memory.

Still, we choose to forget things like embarrassing, unpleasant, or unsettling experiences to protect ourselves from experiencing emotional pain. Sometimes, we willfully forget things that do not "fit" our belief system or moral compass. Under normal circumstances, forgetting does impact our daily lives negatively or positively. However, Psalm 103 commends exceptional diligence not to forget one thing—personal praise to God for the benefits of His steadfast faithfulness and unconditional love.

The superscription of Psalm 103 identifies it as a psalm of David, meaning that it is part of a collection of psalms thought to have been written or collected by him or possibly composed during his reign as king. David was Israel's most renowned king. During his latter years, while reflecting on the personal mercies God bestowed on him, David encouraged his soul,

4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

NIV

PRAISE THE LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

2 Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—

3 who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,

4 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,

5 who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Noting the superscription, “A Psalm of David,” scholars cite David as either the author or compiler of the seventy-three psalms bearing this notation. The psalm underscores a thankful life of one who has experienced God's favor over time. The writer reflects on all that God has done and blessed (praised) the Lord's name for all the benefits He has given (**verses 1-2**). In **verses 3-5**, the text transitions from a general call to worship to more specific reasons for worshipping God—namely, the unmerited benefits of healing from sickness (**verse 3b**), deliverance from death (**verse 4a**), tender loving-kindness and compassionate mercy (**verse 4b**), and a supply of inner satisfaction and renewed strength (**verse 5**).

We, too, have so many reasons to rejoice; God has been gracious and continues to pour out the benefits of undeserved mercy and favor. Believers should be intentional in acknowledging all that God has done and in praising Him for the gifts of goodness and mercy. Worship must be more than a superficial display of emotion. It should begin with a mental rehearsal of blessings and heartfelt gratitude for God's goodness. Personal worship is the catalyst that invigorates and authenticates corporate worship experiences.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How does David teach us to move from nonchalant, half-hearted praise to total praise and worship of God?

Don't Forget Collective Blessings (*Psalm 103:6-10*)

KJV

6 The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.

7 He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.

8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.

10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

NIV

6 The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.

7 He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel:

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

9 He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever;

10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.

In the previous section, the psalmist describes the gracious benefits that God bestowed on him as the motivation to praise and worship God wholeheartedly. Now, he shifts to recalling God's grace and mercy to His covenant people, the nation of Israel. The verses continue by affirming God's gracious character in His dealings with humanity. Because of His steadfast loyalty to His covenant people, God intervened with righteous judgment to help the oppressed and show undeserved mercy to their oppressors (**verse 6**). The writer recalled a specific time in Israel's history when God revealed His grace toward Israel (**verse 7**). God revealed Himself to Israel as compassionate, slow to anger, and full of love (**verse 8**). After all the mighty miracles of the exodus from Egypt, the people dared to construct and worship a golden calf. Because of God's loyalty to His covenant, He responded with a punishment far less than deserved. In **verses 9-10**, the writer elaborates on God's merciful forgiveness, explaining that God does not always accuse or deal with humanity according to their sins. By His grace, God has done nothing less for us. Like an attentive father, He did not fail to see our sins. Instead, God looked beyond them to see our need for salvation. Instead of condemnation, He gave us compassion and sent His only Son to die on the Cross for our redemption. How can we do anything less than offer Him exuberant, sincere praise and the reasonable service of a consecrated life?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How has God revealed His gracious character to us, and how can we express adequate praise for what He does for us?

Don't Forget the Extent of God's Forgiveness

(Psalm 103:11-14)

KJV

11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

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

13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

NIV

11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him;

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

13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him;

14 for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

These verses celebrate God's compassionate call to communal worship. They compare the vastness of God's favor to those who fear Him, to the distance from the earth to the heavens toward those who fear (respect and honor) Him (**verse 11**). The full measure of God's love is beyond human capacity to fathom. The greatness of God's love has removed the remembrance of our sins as far from us as the east is from the west (**verse 12**). Just as east and west can never meet, God's mercy has removed our sins and their deserved punishment from us. The psalm continues with the reason behind God's inclination to forgive sins.

God relates to believers as a compassionate, understanding Father who recognizes and understands His children's weaknesses (**verses 13-14**). This explanation of God's readiness to forgive sins occurs in the present tense and, therefore, applies to believers now. He knows us intimately and is aware of our tendencies to sin. Still, at this very moment, He stands ready to forgive and chooses not to remember our sins when we come to Him in humble, contrite repentance. We should deepen our appreciation for God's undeserved love and seek more meaningful ways to acknowledge Him through private praise and public worship.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How should understanding the breadth of God's love and forgiveness impact the church's worship and ministry?

A Closing Thought

Today, Psalm 103:1-14 still offers several significant lessons for individual believers and the body of Christ. Foremost among them is the responsibility to express wholehearted gratitude and praise for the unmerited benefits of salvation. As the psalmist engaged in meditative reflection, commanded his innermost being to praise God for all He had done, and invited others to join him in communal worship, those who do likewise will become more mindful of God's holistic forgiveness, grace, love, and mercy toward them, and be more eager to deepen their relationship with Him.

Your Life

Rev. D. L. Moody once remarked, "Soul music is the very soul of music," drawing inspiration from the directive in Psalm 103 to let the soul praise the Lord. This week, take a moment to think about how you can transform your song of praise into "soul music" by reflecting on and remembering the countless unmerited blessings bestowed on you by God.

Your World!

James Cleveland's song "Don't Forget to Remember" emphasizes a crucial message for believers: "Don't forget where all your blessings come from." This lesson highlights the essence of this message—the importance of *remembering* as a key to wholehearted praise and worship of God. Take a moment this week to deliberately reflect on the daily blessings that you

receive from God. Then, allow this reflective meditation to guide and shape your personal and communal worship.

Closing Prayer

Dear God, as we intentionally remember all the unmerited blessings that You have bestowed on us, we commit to praising and worshipping You from the depths of our souls wholeheartedly and by living lives that honor and glorify You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Conclusion

(Preparing for Next Week's Lesson)

Change is inevitable. But when it is accompanied by turmoil and uncertainty, how can we find a reason for relief and joy? Consider your response to this question as you study next week's lesson. Read Psalm 145:1, 10-21.

Home Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY, January 20	"The Kingdoms of This World"	(Daniel 2:31-45)
TUESDAY, January 21	"The Kingdom of God's Son"	(Colossians 1:11-20)
WEDNESDAY, January 22	"Christ, the Hope of Glory"	(Colossians 1:21-29)
THURSDAY, January 23	"The Lord Reigns over the Earth"	(Zechariah 14:8-11, 16-21)
FRIDAY, January 24	"An Unshakable Kingdom"	(Hebrews 12:18-29)
SATURDAY, January 25	"Seek First God's Kingdom"	(Matthew 6:25-34)
SUNDAY, January 26	"Bless God's Name Forever"	(Psalm 145:1-10, 17-21)

NOTES
