

Forget Not All His Benefits

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Date: 16 August 2026

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[0:00] You can take your Bibles and turn over to Psalm 103. In this psalm, this psalm helps us to bless God, and it helps us to remember the death of our Savior.

Now, the blessing and the praise in this psalm, it's given to us in the beginning and in the end. And so we look at these opening verses, verses 1 to 2, and this is what we read.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me. Bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul. And then dropping down to verse 20 and what follows.

Bless the Lord, O you His angels, you mighty ones who do His word, obeying the voice of His word. Bless the Lord, all His hosts, His ministers who do His will.

Bless the Lord, all His works, in all places of His dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul. And in fact, that theme of blessing, it just rolls right over into Psalm 104.

[1:28] The companion psalm, you might say, to 103. And so verse 1 of Psalm 104 begins, Bless the Lord, O my soul. And how does that psalm end? Verse 25.

Bless the Lord, O my soul. Praise the Lord. Now, David and other writers of the psalms often speak to themselves in this way, saying, O my soul, I counted no less than 11 times that we find this in the Psalter, the psalmist addressing himself.

Now, Psalm 103 and Psalm 104, it happens repeatedly. Many times over, the psalmist is preaching to himself. He's aiming to stir himself up, and it's to do one thing.

To praise. Is your soul ready to praise the Lord tonight? Is your soul ready to bless Him this evening? Perhaps we need to be stirred up afresh.

Our souls sometimes need that because we're prone to forget. Even David himself is prone to forget. So he says to himself, here in Psalm 103, verse 2, And forget not all His benefits.

[2:42] Now, kids, that might sound a little strange to hear. Forget not all His benefits. I said that to my kids last night around the dinner table. And there was this short, silent pause.

And then the statement, that's confusing. Forget not all His benefits. What does that mean? It means remember all His kindnesses to you.

Remember all the goodness He's shown to you. Remember all the blessings that He's lavished on you. And that's what we're here to do tonight. As we remember the death of Christ, we will remember God's many blessings to us that are wrapped up in the Savior.

The many blessings that tie to Christ. Forget not all His benefits, as Psalm 103 says. Forget not all His kind dealings with you. Forget not all His blessings.

Bless Him for how He has so abundantly blessed you. So, as we prepare to share in the Lord's Supper tonight, we're going to remember God's benefits.

[3:45] All those that are listed for us here in this psalm. You could call them five benefits that make us to break out in blessing to our God.

And we see those benefits. They're listed for us beginning in verse 3. And we'll read all of them right up front. And so, it is God who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good, so that your youth is renewed like the eagles.

So, let's look now at this first blessing, that God forgives all our iniquity. Now, this first one especially, perhaps more than any other, captures David's attention.

Because he then expounds on this benefit, so much so into the body of the psalm, especially verses 6 to 14. We see forgiveness is the theme that David keeps coming back to.

And so, he says in verse 10, that God does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. Then dropping down to verse 12, as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

[5:07] So, David keeps repeating this theme, this wonderful reality, that in Christ, our sins are forgiven. Yes, David's sins forgiven as he looked forward in faith to the Savior, Jesus Christ, whose blood would be shed for him.

In the Old Testament sacrificial system, with all of the shedding of blood, of bulls and goats, it anticipated Jesus Christ. And so, our sins, like David, forgiven as we look in faith to the same Savior, whose blood was shed for us.

So, with David, we can say, God forgives all our iniquity. We can say, He does not deal with us according to our sins.

Now, that word deal, there that we see in verse 10, that has the same root as the word benefits back in verse 2. So, there's this wonderful contrast that I want to draw out for us here.

Verse 2 introduces this list of all of the kind dealings that God has with us. All of these benefits from us, from Him for us.

[6:19] Here is how He does deal with us, and it's just blessing upon blessing upon blessing. Then verse 10 gives us the contrast. Here's how He doesn't deal with us.

He doesn't deal with us according to our sins. Here's how He does treat us, beginning in verse 2. And it's all undeserved, entirely undeserved blessings that follow.

These wonderful benefits. Then in verse 10, here's how He doesn't treat us. He doesn't treat us entirely as we deserve because of our sin. We deserve death.

We deserve punishment. But that's not what we get at all. Because God doesn't treat us according to our sins. God treated His Son according to our sins.

And His Son died the death that we deserved. His Son took the punishment that was owed to us so that we might be forgiven, so that we might be washed clean, made white as snow by the blood of the Lamb.

[7:23] So here is how He deals with us. This kindness lavished upon us. Here is how He does not deal with us according to our sins. So we couldn't boldly approach the throne of God while that record of debt stood against us.

We could not joyfully sit at this table tonight either. Not without our iniquities. All of our iniquity forgiven. And how does that forgiveness come to us?

Only through Jesus Christ. So that's the first benefit that should make us to break out in blessing to our God. All our iniquity forgiven by Him.

Well now let's consider the second benefit. We see it there in the second half of verse 3. That God heals all your diseases. Now when we think of diseases, we often think of sickness.

We often think of illness that results from simply living in this fallen world. Indeed all disease and sickness and ailment and any form of malady, it ties back to sin in that way.

[8:32] If we learn that someone has been diagnosed with a disease, we often think, yes, because this world is fallen. We often don't think, well because they've sinned directly in some way and this is God's punishment for that sin.

I mean Jesus corrected the disciples when they were thinking that way. When they were presuming that a physical ailment was the direct result of sin. Remember when they encountered the blind man in John chapter 9 and they asked Jesus, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?

You see, they were tying his sin or his blindness directly to sin. They were assuming this was punishment for sin. But Jesus says, it was not that this man sinned or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.

So, we understand what Jesus is saying. That we can't just presume that that man's blindness, that any kind of malady or disease is punishment for one's individual sin.

To think that it always is would be going to an extreme. An extreme that the disciples went to. They were certain this man's blindness was a result of sin. And Jesus told them they were wrong.

[9:50] They had gone to the extreme. But then there's another extreme that we must be careful to avoid. And that is that assuming that ailment or disease is never tied to someone or some people's sin.

We see this especially in the Old Testament, which would have obviously been on David's mind as he penned this psalm. Not just the possibility of sickness as punishment, but actually the sure promise of it in the book of Deuteronomy.

When Moses is spelling out the blessings for obedience to the law as well as the curses for disobedience to the law. And he does this in Deuteronomy chapter 28.

And listen to what Moses says beginning in verse 58. If you are not careful to do all the words of this law that are written in this book that you may fear this glorious and awesome name the Lord your God then the Lord will bring on you and your offspring extraordinary afflictions. Afflictions severe and lasting and sicknesses grievous and lasting. And he will bring upon you again all the diseases of Egypt of which you were afraid and they shall cling to you.

[11:08] Every sickness also and every affliction that is not recorded in the book of this law the Lord will bring upon you until you are destroyed. So we see there diseases were one of many possible punishments for covenant disobedience.

God would bring upon the people of Israel diseases because of their sin. Now again that is certainly not to say that any sickness or disease that an Israelite had was in fact a consequence for his or her sin but there were certainly times spelled out here in Deuteronomy 28 when all the people were struck with disease by God for their sin and God told them that he was going to do it.

In fact David had first hand experience with this. David knew this very well. He knew what it was for God to bring disease as a consequence for sin for David's own personal sin.

God brought disease not upon David but upon the people of Israel. Israel suffered because David sinned. It's one of the last recorded accounts in David's life.

2 Samuel 24 David takes a census of the land seemingly out of pride in himself to consider how great he is and how great his kingdom is because of him and what came upon them pestilence or you could say disease that was the punishment that God gave.

[12:39] David actually chose that as one of three punishments. It was in fact the worst outbreak of disease recorded in scripture. So David of all people would know of the terrible reality of disease not just disease in general because we live in a fallen world but disease as punishment for sin.

And that actually makes all of the passages which speak of God healing us all the more powerful. This is an all-encompassing total healing that God speaks of.

The physical bodies that we need healing of but also the healing of our relationship to God. We need that all-encompassing healing that total reversal of covenant curses and that reality only comes through Jesus Christ.

So we must consider the sun S-O-N when we read of the sun S-U-N in Malachi 4-2 But for you who fear my name the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings.

You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. God is talking there of restoration in his relationship with his people. Or in the New Testament in Revelation 22-2 as John describes the new heavens and the new earth and the new Jerusalem there in the new creation we read of the river the river of life that's running through the middle of the city and John says this on either side of the river the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit yielding its fruit each month the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

[14:30] So when we read here in Psalm 103 that one of the benefits of God is that he heals all of our diseases we should think yes of our physical bodies but also we should think of our relationship with God sinful disobedience brings punishment and so often for God's people in the Old Testament that was disease it was punishment for covenant disobedience and what was the remedy for that punishment of disease confession of sin and the forgiveness that follows so the point that I want us to see here is this the first benefit in Psalm 103 forgiveness of all our iniquity and the second benefit the healing of all of our diseases they go together with one coming alongside the other with forgiveness comes relief from that punishment restoration to right relationship with God King Solomon he made this connection very clearly in 1 Kings chapter 8 there in 1 Kings 8 he's praying following the construction of the temple and listen to how he ties the punishment of sickness with the need for forgiveness he says in verse 37 if there is famine in the land if there is pestilence or blight or mildew or locust or caterpillar!

if their enemy besieges them in the land at their gates whatever plague whatever sickness there is whatever prayer whatever plea is made by any man or by all your people Israel each knowing the affliction of his own heart and stretching out his hands toward this house then here in heaven your dwelling place and forgive you see with that forgiveness of sin then comes the healing of sickness and the restoration with God because healing of all of our diseases as David says is really shorthand for the reversal of covenant curses so tonight as we look to Christ and his death on the cross for us we are reminded God forgives all of our iniquity and God heals us of all our diseases

the punishment for our sins was placed on Christ he bore He bore the curse that we deserved he became the curse for us he was punished so that we would not be given all of that consider Isaiah 53 5 is a well-known verse but listen to it afresh but he was pierced for our transgressions he was crushed for our iniquities upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace and with his wounds we are healed the punishment that we deserved Jesus endured so we can say even as we still live in this fallen world where there is sickness there is disease we can say God has healed us of all our diseases because we're forgiven and the punishment that those diseases represented that punishment fell on Christ that's the second benefit that should make us to burst out in praise burst out with blessing to our God he heals all our diseases now the third he redeems our lives from the pit we see that there in verse 4 who redeems your life from the pit now what we have here is resurrection language we have this this old testament glimpse into what the new testament unpacks so much more fully and in so much more detail for us you see when

David says pit the pit he's not just talking about a hole in the ground like like if we fell into a pit with no way to climb out and we're needing to be saved out of that pit we had a large pit in our backyard growing up that we dug by hand with our shovels it was about six feet deep and if a small animal fell!

into that pit then it would need to have its life saved out of it but that's not what David necessarily has ultimately in mind here because we might be thinking well yes God does save me God does rescue me from trials from dangerous situations like a pit Joseph knew what that was like to be in a pit Jeremiah knew what that was like to be in a pit but here David is thinking even more so of something much more dire David is thinking of death the pit is not just a hole in the ground that you fall into it's a hole in the ground that your casket will be buried in it's the grave it's the place of the dead the Old Testament often uses the word Sheol or Hades to describe this place of the dead this and Sheol is the place of the dead the pit is the place of the dead as

[19:46] David says in Psalm 30 verse 9 what profit is there in my death if I go down to the pit will the dust praise you will it tell of your faithfulness so you see David has the grave in mind and it's from the grave that God and God alone redeems us as Psalm 49 verse 15 says the very same thing but God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol for he will receive me you see David is thinking in extremes here in Psalm 103 he's not just thinking in terms of trials and tribulations in this life though certainly there's something of that here but David has in mind something far more significant as well he's thinking about the difference between eternal life and eternal death life enjoyed forever in the presence of God as the psalmist says in Psalm 49 being received by God that implies being received into his

David is thinking of that when he says that God redeems our lives from the pit he saves us from sheol he saves us from the grave he saves us from eternal death he brings us to himself for all of eternity it's the promise of resurrection life that David also speaks of in Psalm 16 10 for you will not abandon my soul to sheol or let your holy one see corruption how does God do that how does he keep us from sheol how does he bring about this eternal life in resurrected bodies well he redeems us as David says here in Psalm 103 he redeems our lives from the pit redeemed ransomed!

That means bought back with a price and how costly that price is it requires the shedding of blood the blood of a perfect spotless sacrifice the blood of God's very own perfect spotless son because his blood was shed for us our lives have been redeemed our lives have been ransomed!

redeemed from the grave redeemed from the pit of hell and sure to live for all of eternity with God so that's the third benefit that makes us break out in blessing to our God tonight he redeems our life from the pit now the fourth he crowns us with steadfast love and mercy so if the last benefit drew out the resurrection language this benefit draws out the royal language if the last benefit began with us thinking in terms of being low in the pit well this last one this next one brings out and raises us up high as God crowns us now kids have you ever had a crown put on your head I don't think so you ever been to Burger King you ever had one of those paper crowns put on your head vivid memories I can feel it right now paper crowns on your head maybe you haven't had one put on your head but we know what it is it's a hat it's this very important very unique very dignified hat it's one that would be crowned with jewels made of gold well

David says here that God crowns his people he puts a crown upon our heads but here in Psalm 103 it's not a crown of gold it's not a crown with God's very character qualities it's a crown of his attributes so think he redeems us from the pit to adorn us with his steadfast love and mercy we were so low in our sin and he has raised us up so very high and crowned us with that love and

mercy again this ties right to Jesus it's because of him consider Paul's words in Ephesians 2 and here at David's words here in Psalm 103 just echoing in the words of Paul Ephesians 2 beginning in verse 4 but God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead in our trespasses made us alive together with

[24 : 30] Christ by grace you have been saved and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus oh Psalm 103 it's just ringing with the same wonderful truths of Ephesians chapter 2 from languishing in the pit dead in our sins to now crowned with steadfast love and mercy seated in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus what a benefit that should make us break out in praise to our God it was because of his mercy it was because of his great love that we've been saved by grace through faith and our faith is in his son Jesus Christ who himself raised from the dead now seated at the right hand of God in the heavenly places he has been crowned and so too have we crowned with steadfast love and mercy God gives so many blessings in this life that are good we see this in psalm 104 the very next psalm that again pairs so well with psalm 103 something of the continuation you could even say of psalm 103 and in psalm 104 we see the good that God satisfies us with in this life we considered it even in our worship this morning

God provides what we need to live he provides all of creation what it needs to live so psalm 104 beginning in verse 27 says these all look to you that's all of creation these all look to you to give them their food in due season when you give it to them they gather it up when you open your hand they are filled with good things perhaps this very psalm psalm 104 Paul had in mind when he says in Acts 14 17 that God did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons satisfying your hearts with food and gladness so yes God satisfies us physically he gives us good for our physical lives but even more than that he satisfies us spiritually he gives us such great good spiritually how does he do that with himself what does psalm 34 8 say taste and see that the Lord is good meaning he himself satisfies our souls as nothing else can so as we share in the Lord's supper! tonight have you come with a hungry soul ready to be satisfied in God taste and see that he is good see how he satisfies!

just as David says in Psalm 63 beginning in verse 5 he actually brings together imagery of physical satisfaction with spiritual satisfaction in God my soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips when I remember you upon my bed and meditate on you in the watches of the night so David is saying I remember you God I meditate on you God and I am satisfied I'm satisfied like somebody who has rich food I don't presently have that I'm not eating that at the moment but I'm satisfied in a far deeper more abundant way because I've remembered you I've meditated on you in the watches of the night because God satisfies us with good what is more good than he himself what could strengthen us more than him strengthened renewed to be like the eagle as our souls find their refreshment in him so five benefits tonight as we take the Lord's supper oh how we bless him how we praise him because all of these benefits all of these blessings they find they come to us in all their fullness in Christ in Christ God forgives all your iniquity in Christ God heals all our diseases in Christ God redeems our life from the pit in Christ God crowns us with steadfast love and mercy and in Christ God satisfies us with good five wonderful soul stirring benefits that we've considered tonight to lead us to praise to bless our God who lavishes these benefits on us in Christ so we've looked at five but David could have certainly had more than five to share couldn't he in fact you could say he actually encourages us to consider more because he doesn't say forget not these five benefits that I'll list for you here in Psalm!

[29 : 42] He says forget not all his benefits there aren't just these five how many more can you and I think of tonight how many more could come to our mind tonight as we meditate on God's kindness to us in Christ the benefits of God given to you Christian through Christ so may we consider them even as the bread and the cup are passed!

tonight remember all his benefits so that all that is within you may bless his holy name!