

Surprised By God

Psalm 103 || Pastor Matt Trexler || 10 May 2020

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: How is God bigger to you now than He was a few years ago?

Worship: Psalm 103:11-14 (*Read aloud three times, spend time in reflection listening for God's invitation to you.*)

Sermon Summary for Psalm 103

The longer our journey in the Christian life, the larger our view of God will become. We can see a beautiful picture of this in David, who at the end of his life joyfully reflected on what he learned about the Lord: The Heights of God's Love (v11,8) – It's easy to fall into thinking that God is some distant judge rather than our Father. Instead of being good or generous, we see Him as withholding, looking for ways to be angry at us. But that isn't the God of the Bible, who invites us to discover who He is. "*Come and see...*" says Jesus. In our uncertainty, we can look to a man like David, who walked with God almost his whole life and tells us that God is more loving and faithful and forgiving and good than we could ever imagine. Our Father loves and finds pleasure in being gracious (Luke 12:32).

The Width of His Forgiveness (v12) – Why is it so difficult to believe God loves and accepts us as we are? Because forgiveness is difficult; it takes sacrifice. Our guilt prevents us from accepting we could ever deserve God's love. So His forgiveness never really sinks in. But at some point, the truth hits us: we cannot redeem ourselves. It's beyond our efforts or abilities. But a remarkable truth about following Christ is that our walk *begins* with being forgiven by God – before we've ever taken a step toward Him. God knows we will continue to sin – even after we've been saved and forgiven. And He still chose to do all that was necessary to redeem us. Jesus' death and resurrection has immersed the world in our Father's forgiving love. The new reality of the world is grace and forgiveness.

The Depths of His Compassion (v13) – Not only are we truly, completely forgiven, God has welcomed us into His family. David knows that it's impossible to enjoy God if we don't think God enjoys us. That's especially true if we fail to see that He is ever loving, ever forgiving, ever compassionate. Jesus wants nothing more than for us to know the love of God. And each of us has a deep-rooted desire for a Good Father. We do because God put it there. Why? Because He wants that relationship with us. And what tremendous stability – what an immovable foundation – we have when we take to heart that the Almighty Creator is our loving Father. What a gift we have been given in this relationship – where to our Father's ears, even the most feeble praise from His children brings Him eternal joy.

Discussion Questions (*It's better to wrestle deeply with a few good questions than to gloss over many.*)

- What do you think it means to "bless the Lord"? How does that phrase affect you?
 - From Psalm 103, what is the measurement of God's steadfast love toward us?
 - What makes it possible for God to forgive all our sins and remove them from us? Has He done that for you?
 - Have there been moments of shocking or inexplicable forgiveness in your life (whether offered or received by you)? What effect has that had on you and that relationship?
 - What does parenthood teach us about God's character and thoughts toward us?
 - How do you experience His love and compassion in your day-to-day life?
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What Can We Be Praying For?

Bless the Lord by praising Him through the entire alphabet in your community group, as a family, or individually. For example: A - You are Almighty, B - You are Breathtaking, C - You are Compassionate, D - You are our Deliverer.

