

Psalm 103 // “Never Forget”

If you have your Bibles, would you turn to Psalm 103?

Before we dive deeper in this I'll say this, this passage speaks to those who have already experienced God in a real way and who would say that they follow Him. If you would say you don't know God or have a relationship with Him, I am so glad that you are here today! Because you are getting an opportunity to peer into the beauty of what it means to know God and to be known by Him and I have spent time praying for you as well this week that you would leave out of here as a new worshipper of the God that graciously allowed you to be here today!

As you turn there, and if you can multitask, I want you to think of the most breathtaking scenery you have ever seen. What were your emotions? Did you cry like the double rainbow guy? “It's so beautiful!! It's almost a triple rainbow!” Were you just excited that you had the chance to be there? Maybe you praised God for His mighty works? For me it was when I went to St. Vincent down in the Caribbean. I went down there to help lead a basketball missions trip. Talking about suffering for Jesus right? While we were there we had multiple opportunities to just take in the scenery of this beautiful island.

One of the many questions I would ask the people I would interact with was “how amazing is it to live in such a beautiful place?! You get to wake up and see some of the most beautiful water and amazing mountains. This is awesome!”

Some would agree and other would say, “meh...you get use to it.” What kind of answer is that?!?! Are you crazy?!?! I would LOVE to see this everyday and I don't think I would ever get use to it! They became so familiar with the beauty that it lost its wonder. One guy told me when I asked him was, there's too many things going on like my family and my job. It's nice, but life happens, you just forget about it.

When I read Psalm 103, I have to wonder, is that how I am with God? At one point He was so beautiful in my life, I adored him, I worshipped him with everything, but then...life happened.

Can you relate to that? Maybe you remember at one point in your life it was easy to praise God and see Him for who He is but then, life happened. You just got busy. That 9-5 takes up your time and any other free time you have your attempting to go to small group consistently or serve the church. You're running around taking the kids to school or practice. Or maybe it was something tragic: Cancer happened. Your failed marriage happened. That death happened. That miscarriage happened. That infertility happened. And suddenly you were no longer in awe of the beauty of God or overwhelmed by the wonder of his presence in your life. It's not that you one day

decided to stop following God or you came to the conclusion that he didn't exist, but life knocked you down and you haven't quite been able to get back up again.

Why does this happen and how do we fight against losing the beauty of God that we once so desperately held on to?

I think the answer to that is found in Psalm 103. And what we will see is that we easily forget. In Psalm 103 David starts and ends this Psalm by having a conversation with himself, telling his soul to bless (or praise) the Lord. So to combat these areas of forgetfulness in our lives we see David invites us into a conversation that He is having with himself.

1 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! 2 Bless the Lord, O my soul,

When was the last time you had a good conversation with yourself? I'm not talking about wondering "did I leave the crockpot on?" or walking around mumbling like the guy you always avoid at work. You know...THAT guy. I'm talking about you wrestling with your thoughts, maybe even answering yourself and getting everyone around you to be like, is that that guy from work? David is doing that here and he's telling himself to praise God with his everything, his whole nature—intellect, emotion, feeling, sentiment—brain, heart, lungs, tongue, you name it, David is calling on himself to praise the Lord. And because this repeats itself we need to pay special attention to it!

In another Psalm, Psalm 34, David writes that "I will bless the Lord at all times." "I will" means "I choose to." Not because I feel like it, but because of what I know is true even when I don't feel like it. What does that look like?

When that person I've been praying for comes to know

Jesus? Yes, you can choose to bless the Lord with all of your soul.

When I finally was able to see victory in my life from a past struggle? Yes, you can choose to bless the Lord with all of your soul.

You mean when my family member is sick? Yes, you can choose to bless the Lord with all of your soul.

When I'm going through infertility? Yes, you can choose to bless the Lord with all of your soul.

What about when my marriage is falling apart? Yes, you can choose to bless the Lord with all of your soul.

We know His character and His work from His Word that he IS good, even in the moments we can't see and feel it. When we can't feel his hand, we can trust his heart! Tony Evans points out that our feelings don't have brains. We have brains and we have to sometimes tell our feelings how to feel. We don't always feel our way into our beliefs, but sometimes need to believe our way into feelings. And God is good even when I don't feel it.

If there's one thing I want you to remember today, it's this little phrase: "Never Forget." My hope today is that we will leave from here choosing to praise our great God because we

choose never to forget who he is, all his benefits, and how He works in our lives.

So for everyone at all of our locations, I have two remedies for forgetfulness.

1. Choose to Remember God's Goodness

David sets the stage for us to do just that by saying in verse 2 **Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits**

When I was younger, my granny would have us in church every Sunday. Without fail, every Sunday, one of the older deacons by the name of Deacon Mac when asked how he was doing, would always reply with "I'm thankful because God woke me up in my right mind!" Or "he woke me up with breath in my lungs so the least I can say today is thank you!" One of my favorite things was hearing him pray. Somewhere in his prayer he would always add "When I think of His goodness, and all that He has done for me..My soul cries out...HALLELUJAH!"

Summit Family can we get back to thinking back on the goodness of the Lord? And all that He has done for us? David in talking to himself is saying "you need to think back on the goodness of the Lord!"

Now, most of you, if I asked, 'Hey, how do you know the goodness of the Lord?' you'd look at me with a kind but blank expression. Why can't we think of any answers to this question? It's all good, David helps us out: David lists it out for

us so that we would never forget.

3 who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, 4 who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, 5 who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

While many of the things in David's experience are unique to him (being a Giant killer, or a king for instance), what he mentions here is universal for all believers. These are some of the thousands of OT promises that are "yes" in Christ Jesus!

Remember He forgives (v. 3) He first mentions the forgiveness of sins. I don't know if you caught that word or not. Its small in length but so grand in scope. Its that word "all" not just some of his iniquities, but ALL! God knew EVERYTHING about David, every little detail David probably wanted to hide and yet God chose to forgive him?! David committed adultery and murder and some of you think your sins are past forgiveness but that simply is not true! Your sin does deserve punishment from God, but God in His love sent his son Jesus to live a perfect life for you and take the penalty of your sin that you deserved for you sin. It's in our placing our faith in that, that forgiveness is now offered to us! Through Jesus, the forgiveness of God covers 'all' iniquities, past, present, and future.

Remember He heals (v. 3) David moves to the next blessing: God's healing of diseases. I truly believe that God in his wisdom can very well heal us of our ailments and sickness. This is not to say that all sickness is a direct punishment for a particular sin or that God will immediately answer every

prayer for physical healing. What we do know is that sickness and sins are healed in Christ Jesus. We are going to a place where there is no more sickness or death or pain or crying and God will wipe away every tear! EVEN THOUGH it feels like healing will never come, we worship a God who took our pain so that we could one day be made whole.

Remember He redeems (v. 4) This is a theological word which means he buys you back. He stepped in and claimed you as his own. When I think of how Jesus saved me from my own personal addictions! The pit was calling my name but God had other plans. To think that Derrick DeLain would even be up here preaching at all is mind blowing to me! What's even better to realize than simply preaching...is that my name is written in heaven and I'm going to see Jesus. Not because of anything I have done, but because of Jesus has done for me! He purchased me with His blood so I'm not an enemy or an orphan, but now a redeemed son of God.

Remember He crowns with love and mercy (v. 4) You see, even when you didn't deserve royalty, he treated you like it! The picture of being crowned is amazing to me! In every fairy tale or story when you see the king or queen being honored it's a royal celebration of honor and esteem and God lays that love and mercy on us because of Jesus! I've seen his mercy in how He saw fit to bless me with a wife who is the most gracious person I've met and how her dealings with me point me to Jesus. I think about the ministry here at the church that He allows me to be apart of and the community of brothers and sisters who encourage me and help to shoulder the load

of ministry with me! It's amazing to think about!

Remember He satisfies (v. 5) Finally, David mentions God satisfying his people with good. So much so that they have this renewed energy that gives you freedom like that of an eagle. These are the benefits that caused David to worship and if we are found in Jesus, so should it be with us!

What do you need to remember today? Maybe your sin runs so deep that you don't think He can forgive it? 1 John says that if you confess your sin, He is faithful and just to forgive. Remember. Remember that in Ephesians we are reminded that we have redemption, not because we deserve it, but because God gave it to us through the blood of Jesus. Maybe you need to remember that Jesus said that if you drink of the water he has it will satisfy you so that you will never thirst again. What do you need to remember?

These benefits are YES in Jesus Christ! He has made it possible for those who put their trust in Him to be forgiven, to be healed, to be redeemed, to be completely loved, to experience new mercies every day, to find satisfaction in Him and only Him because nothing else that we put our trust in can do this! **What would our worship look like if we spent more time *choosing to remember the goodness of the Lord in our lives*?** We naturally do this with other good experiences in our lives. When our favorite teams win a national championship. I legit have not gone a month since March of 2017 without being reminded that UNC won the national title in basketball last year. I don't care, but their fans sure do. You see for them, they can't help talking about it because it's in

the talk that there is a renewed sense of joy that brings them back to that moment that they do not want to forget. What is we saw God that way?

I love the Book of Psalms because in them you will see psalms of praise and adoration toward God; you will find psalms of thanksgiving for things God has done. In the psalms, you will also find ones that deal with pain, suffering, repentance, and desperately crying out for forgiveness. However in this psalm you see all of those things culminate here in these first five verses. David asks for many of those things in other psalms, but in this one here, he isn't asking, He is praising God because he has *already experienced* them!

Never forget, **When it comes to the benefits of the Lord, you don't have to ask for them, you already experience them because of Jesus.** Here's what's dope, because we have experienced them, it should empower us to ask for even greater things in Jesus! Let this fuel you during the year of prayer!

I love that word "benefits." We are familiar with it especially when we think about jobs. At Blue Ridge we have some members who work at SAS and the benefits that they have are amazing! Five onsite subsidized cafeterias, fully stocked break rooms with free food and free breakfast on Fridays, they have an onsite health care center with primary care doctors, and each employee gets their own office. I was jealous until I realized they don't get the benefit of seeing Danny Frank's puppet shows on Tuesday afternoon or NRC Pastor John

Muller's beautiful and majestic sense of style on a regular basis. There are certain benefits to jobs that you don't get if you aren't apart of that team. Listen, if you do not have a relationship with Jesus, you do not have the same benefits as a believer. Many of you want the benefits without being an employee. Even if you don't have them, you do have the benefit of a God who is relentlessly pursuing you. You can have all these benefits if only you receive them! Stop running! Stop trying to save yourself! Rest in the fact that God wants to give you these benefits because of what Jesus has done for you.

Not only do we choose to remember God's goodness by looking at all His benefits in the present, but we also see it by never forgetting all he has done in the past. Look at verse 6 **6 The Lord works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. 7 He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel. 8 The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

Where does David look to find out what God's character is like? Guess what he does? He cracks open His Bible. V.8 is a direct quote of Exodus 32 - where God reveals His character to Moses.

What I love about that section of Exodus leading up to what David is referencing in Exodus 34 is a prayer that Moses' prays. **He prays for a greater revelation for himself and the people of Israel to see the ways of the Lord** that never change. Family, you don't need to see something new. What you need to see is that you were dead in your sins and God in

His grace saw fit to not leave you there! He knew that you could not save yourself and because He desired for you to know Him, He sent Jesus to die for you. So that his righteousness becomes your righteousness. His holiness covers your unholiness. This is what you need to see over and over again. His mercy, his love, his forgiveness!

Moses doesn't pray for God to DO anything but for Israel to SEE what He has done and is doing! And God does it, and He proclaims of Himself in Exodus 34:6-7 **Exodus 34:6b-7a (ESV)** "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, **7** keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...

Why would David bring the attention here? Because David again is pointing to the faithfulness and goodness of God who worked in the nation of Israel all of those years past. **If God was faithful then, then David is showing that He will be good even now. Past grace is evidence of future grace!**

Family, that is what I want you to see. God has been good; He is good, he always will be good, and that means He is good in your life RIGHT NOW! He is good in your sickness right now! He is good in your divorce right now! He is good even though your son walked away from the faith, right now! He is good even when you do not have children, right now! He is good in your singleness, right now! He is good even though you lost your job, right now! He is good even though you're paralyzed by depression or anxiety, right now!

Summit family, I don't know what you're seeing in your circumstances. I don't know what 'bad' thing is plaguing you right now. But I know this. The God who raised Jesus from the dead is just as powerful and just as good, RIGHT NOW!"

David quotes God's promise to Moses, which has been true now for hundreds of years, he says, that God's love for them was unchanging, and unconditional. How did they know this, and how do we?

9 He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. **10** He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. **11** For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; **12** as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. **13** As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.

Talk about benefits, this is a benefit of the gospel of Jesus Christ. That because Jesus lived a life that we could not live and died a death that we all deserved to die because of our sin, we get an opportunity to place our faith in that and so now there is no anger towards us! All the wrath of God was poured out on His son Jesus and now what is left for us is grace and forgiveness

Now think about this...how high is the heavens from the earth? Can't fathom it? That's how much he loves us because of Jesus! How far is the east from the west? I've had the

pleasure of traveling to Asia on several occasions and I DREAD those 18 hr plus plane rides! That's just the east and west of one planet! How far is the east and west of eternity?! Can't measure it? Well that's how far he forgives our sin because of Jesus! All I have to do is look my daughter in her beautiful green eyes and she gets the world from me! If me in my sinful state can show compassion to my children how much so will the father show compassion to me?

Family, if this does not stir in your heart an emotion of thankfulness then you do not have a high view of your sin. This is amazing grace and grace is not amazing when we think we are already perfect.

God was showing Himself to be God to His people and David said this is what we need to remember about our God because we are so quick to forget!

Where have you forgotten the goodness of the Lord in your life? Maybe you are in the darkest season that you have ever been in. You feel abandoned, you feel forgotten, you feel left out, you're afraid of what tomorrow will bring because today feels like hell on earth.

Let me be honest with you. Your circumstances may not change. Tomorrow may be harder than today. But in the midst of that, maybe you need to pause and be reminded of His faithfulness towards you through Jesus. Reflect on how little you deserve grace but He gave it to you anyway. Maybe you need to sit down and reflect on your life and see how God

moved in such a way to draw you to Himself. Maybe you should start having a conversation with yourself where you say "Soul, man things aren't easy right now...but we need to remind ourselves to remember how God has dealt with us because of Jesus and the benefits that I have in Him!" And if people think you're crazy for talking to yourself, say, "I'm finally feeling sane for the first time in my life!" Praise God for it!

The first remedy for forgetfulness is to choose to remember God's goodness. The second remember is to..

2. Remind Yourself of Your Weaknesses

14 For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.
15 As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; **16** for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more.

The flip side of forgetting God's goodness is magnifying our strength. Sometimes we just need to remind ourselves, like David did, how fragile and incapable we are. When I'm talking about being weak, I don't mean comparing yourself to fitness guru's like Cory G. With time and dedication, you can get physically strong but in comparison to God we are so insignificant. I hate to say this, but you are just dust! Turn to your neighbor and say "you so dusty!" Look at your other neighbor and say "oooo you're super dusty!"

On a semi-regular basis, my daughter draws pictures of me

and my wife. She'll proudly present it to me saying "daddy it's you!" and in that moment, she's Picasso in her mind. However, last time I checked, my head isn't as big as she pictured. I don't have claws for fingers and one leg isn't longer than the other. Or maybe I do and if I do, please don't tell me. I don't want to know. But I love the innocence in her thinking that this picture she has presented to me is a spitting image of her daddy, but its not. Kids forget that their kids. However, I can't forget who she is and I have to respond to her accordingly.

There are 22 verses here in this psalm and only two of those describe who we are...dusty little flowers easily taken away by the wind. It's not that we don't matter to God, in fact, we are made in His image. But David in his wisdom reminds himself and of his weakness but he compares it to the eternity of God and who He is.

When we forget that we are dust, He remembers for us. And he pledges his love toward us anyway. In all of his knowledge of our sin and failures He loves us. How do we know? Verse 17 **17 But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting (specifically) on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children. 18 to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments.** David, as soon as he reminds himself of his frailty, it forces him to bring his attention to the love that God has for him that last for eternity! What does this mean for you and me? It means that in our lives of dust, that God will not, because of Jesus remove his love from our lives!

This quote from author and Bible teacher Nancy Guthrie describes so accurately the truth of our weakness but the strength of the One who has promised to never leave us or forsake us: *"... I am not strong. However, I am tethered to Someone who is strong. I am not holding on to hope in terms of a positive perspective about the future or an innate sense of optimism, but rather holding on to the living person of Jesus Christ. I am grabbing hold of the promises of God, His purposes, and His provision, and refusing to let go."*

This is why Paul was able to say that he BOASTED in his weakness, knowing that "when he was weak, THEN he was strong." **Our weakness isn't a barrier to the strength of God; it's the very doorway into that strength.**

This is ours when we fear God and obey Him. To fear God is to have an understanding of awe and respect for the majesty of God. So when we begin to understand that, our response is to obey Him in what He commands. What He commands is for our good even when we don't think it is. It is in our trials and in our weakness that we get the opportunity to work out our faith and trust in Him! Art Azurdia, a pastor and author from Portland, Oregon says this about faith and how it works **"You see faith is not simply believing in God, it is believing God. Taking Him at his word and living in obedience no matter what the cost because you know that He will always do what He says because His saying is His doing."** -Art Azurdia

We need to stop thinking of "belief, faith and trust" as only a head thing. In the Bible, they are mental - but they are so much more. If your faith is only a mental affirmation - you don't have what the Bible calls real faith - faith that relies on God and trusts God.

So in the midst of your trials when He says He will never leave you or forsake you, do you trust that? When He says He will not put more on you than you can bear, do you trust that? When he says he will provide a way of escape when you are tempted, do you trust Him and look for his deliverance? When he tells you to put God first in your tithe, do you do it? When he tells you to wait during a time of aloneness that God will provide a mate for you? When you begin to realize how weak you are, your dependence on God grows more and more. As Pastor JD often says, if dependence is the goal, then weakness is an advantage.

We will mess up. We will drop the ball in your obeying God. We will struggle with unfaithfulness to the day that we die but through Jesus and the covenant that He established on our behalf it will endure for those who trust in Jesus' righteousness over their own. Because of Jesus we have an opportunity to not be left in our shortcomings, but confess them, pick up where we fell, and move forward in grace that is provided to us because of Jesus. That is something worth never forgetting!

Some of you are thinking this is great, but I'll leave from here and enter back into chaos. I believed its summarized in verse

19 **19 The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.**

Again you may be thinking "that sounds great, but what about the here and now?" I thought about that for a few weeks now. And as I was going through my own moments of weakness and doubt, a dear brother of mine sent me this text message and it spoke directly to this. He said "We are intrinsically affected by the way we feel at the moment, the way we feel about ourselves, the way we feel about a situation, the future, you name it! But in Christ you have the freedom and the power to not be affected by the way you feel at the moment and do what you must do regardless of how you feel. This is the power of Christ in us, the inner workings of His grace through us. What an amazing hope and freedom to no longer be prisoners of sin and self! What glorious blessings that we have that the power of Christ to no longer pay attention to ourselves when it comes to worry, fear, and guilt. His blood made us holy, and the fact we now abide in His mighty hands is our rest." We must do what we have to do and that doing, is never forgetting to choose to remember the goodness of the Lord which should cause us to praise Him for who He is!

Jesus sits on the throne and his kingdom will never end. That is a promise! Our sufferings here are for a moment but in light of eternity we can have hope that trouble will not last always.

Will you join the chorus of praising the Lord? It's a choice. You choose to remember. Never forget, **Bless the LORD, O my soul!** I want to lead you in a time where you choose to rejoice in the

Lord, and then our worship leaders will come and we will declare it together in song. Will you bow your heads with me?

20 Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word! **21** Bless the LORD, all his hosts, his ministers, who do his will! **22** Bless the LORD, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul!

Father, let us not forget what you have done for us! If we had 10,000 tongues we will still not be able to mention all of your benefits towards us in Jesus. Help us to remember through the power of your Holy Spirit. Help us choose to remember you in all of your goodness towards us. It is then that your Holy Spirit will empower us to worship you and to bless your name forever. In Jesus' name.