

DIVING DEEPER DISCUSSION GUIDE

TEXT SUMMARY

There are any number of texts that could have been chosen to study the goodness of God. But Psalm 103 has to be one of the finest examples of the goodness of God as expressed through the way He deals with our sin.

The inscription identifies it as a psalm of David; however, we don't have any information about the life events that might lie behind the composition of the psalm. What we do have, however, is David's rhapsody of praise to the LORD, Yahweh, the covenant-keeping God of Israel, for the way He deals so graciously with our sins and iniquities and transgressions.

INTRODUCTION (observation):

The psalm opens and closes with a call to worship. In between, the body of the psalm lays out the many reasons we have for "blessing" (praising) the Name of God.

- 1. What does the psalm say God does?
- 2. What does the psalm say God does not do?
- 3. What does the psalm say God is?

DISCUSSION (interpretation):

- 1. One of the problems with the prosperity gospel is that it cherry-picks texts from throughout Scripture to create a tapestry of lavish promises that God will always ensure that His people are healthy and wealthy. How would you respond to someone who claimed that v. 2-5 are promises that God will always do what these verses describe? (hint: *genre*)
- 2. The body of the psalm (v. 8-18) examines the way God deals with our sin. How does David use these categories to describe God's patience with sinners?
 - Time (v. 8-9, 15-17)
 - Space (both vertical and horizontal, v. 11-12)
 - Family relationships (13-14)

<u>SO WHAT</u>? (application): Here we move toward firstperson pronouns as we begin to consider how we must respond to what God has said in His Word.

- The goodness of God is a coin with two sides. On the one hand, the goodness of God means that He is always good, never evil. This is, of course, bad news because evil is ever present in our hearts, and it is terrifying to contemplate the fact that the Holy one of Israel hates the evil that is in us. On the other hand, it is so reassuring to know that that the same Holy one of Israel is so compassionate and forgiving.
 - Which aspect of God's goodness predominates in the way you think about your relationship with Him?
 - How can you avoid swinging into one extreme or the other (either living always in a "<u>Sinners in</u> <u>the Hands of an Angry God</u>" mode or taking the grace and mercy of God for granted)?
- 2. This would be a powerful passage of Scripture to pray through, personalizing it as you pray. It opens and closes with self-talk, a call to worship our good God. As you read/pray the psalm, you can continue in that self-talk mode, inserting personal pronouns to make it your own. (For example: "who forgives all my iniquity... who crowns my life with steadfast love and mercy... The Lord is merciful and gracious to me, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love to me... He will not always chide me... He does not deal with me according to my sins, nor repay me according to my iniquity... For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward me... As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on me...") Make this glorious psalm your own.

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