

Psalm 103: "Bless the LORD?"

Intro: Bill was 14 years old. Diagnosed with **Kyphosis**. Commonly known as hunchback. Spine is curved in on itself. Lose height. Bad posture. Pain. Restricted ability. Surgery. Grew 2 inches. Tennis through high school. Dramatically improved movement and ability.

Martin Luther, taking lead from Augustine, "Homo incurvatus in se". Humans are curved in on themselves. Our souls are deformed. Because of sin and Fall, we are "naval gazers." Always thinking, concerned, focused on ourself. What's going on with us. Others thinking of us.

I. Bless Him, Soul! (1-2) "All that is within me." Thoughts, feelings, emotions, desires, etc.

A. **Soul Talk.** Don't want to talk to self in 2nd person. That's fine. Talk to your soul instead.

B. **What do you say?** "Look up! Look away from yourself. Look to the LORD!"

C. **Bless Him.** How do we bless Him? He blesses us. Speak well of Him. Praise Him.

APP: *It's easy to forget.* We have to make ourselves remember. To think about the benefits.

II. For His Benefits (3-5)

A. **Benevolence.** Kindness. Grace. His benefits are gifts of His grace. Undeserved. **Read!**

ILL: Martin Luther. Completely changed by grace. Became a new person. No longer feared/hated God, but was able to respond in love and gratitude and Bless God for his mercy/grace.

APP: *How about you?* Have you experienced His mercy/grace. How often to go back to these?

III. For His Promises (6-13)

A. **To the degree that you believe these promises,** is the degree to which you'll live in freedom and joy and peace on a consistent basis. Do you believe these things?

B. **He doesn't repay us according to our iniquities.** Benefits. "Wages of sin..." Earning.

ILL: The Office. Michael Scott. Visits a third grade class. Underprivileged kids. 10yrs later he's called on to come through on his promise. **Scott's Tots.** If you graduate high school I will pay for your college tuition. Wanted to inspire them! *"I've made some empty promises in my life, but hands down, that was the most generous."*

APP: God doesn't make empty promises. He always keeps His Word. Every promise He's made to His people is true for you by grace through faith. So remember His promises.

Whatever God has said about you and to you is true, whether or not apply it to soul by faith.

IV. For His Covenant (14-18)

A. **A covenant is an intentional commitment to a unifying relationship** with someone for their benefits. It's a holy bond.

B. **God has obligated himself to us in a committed relationship.**

C. **Throughout Bible, marriage is the most frequently used illustration** relationship with God. Husband of His people, sin against God is equated to adultery/prostitution, we are the bride of Christ, in glory there's going to be a great heavenly wedding feast.

ILL: Annie. Orphan. Shows up Mr. Warbuck's home: "Can I take your sweater?" "Will I get it back?" "Annie, What you like to do first?" Looks around the big house, "The Windows, then the floors. That way if I drip..." "Annie, you don't have to do any cleaning here." **Adoption.**

APP: Why would anyone so great care so much about a poor, little, orphan. But that's exactly what Our God has done through Jesus Christ who said "I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you." And He has, thought the Spirit of adoption, He's fulfilled His covenant with His people. He knows our weaknesses, our frailty, that we are dust, grass, etc. Steadfast love.

V. For His Rule (19-22)

A. **Not just millionaire.** King. Over everything. He's our God!

B. **Everyone should Bless Him.** Bow down to Him. Speak well of Him.

ILL: Selah has learned a new word this week. "Mine!" "Who's phone is that?" "Dadda" "Who's drink is that?" "Mama." Thinks if she says "mine" then she's claiming it.

Abraham Kuyper: "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!"

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Martin Luther got through the mass and kept going as a monk, but those experiences capture his terrible internal burdens. He got to the point where he was convinced that God was so pure and holy no-one could ever hope to be saved. All would be abandoned to the torments of hell. "More than once (I) was driven to the very abyss of despair so that I wished I had never been created. Love God? I hated him!"

And then in 1513, 8 years after that thunderstorm, 7 years after that terrible mass, Luther had a third great religious experience. He was lecturing on the book of Psalms at the University of Wittenburg, then in 1515 on Romans, then in 1516 on Galatians. It was during those studies Luther discovered a life transforming insight from the gospel – that God's requirement for us is not perfection but faith. "My situation was that, although an impeccable monk, I stood before God as a sinner troubled in conscience, and I had no confidence that my merit would assuage him. Therefore I did not love a just and angry God, but rather hated and murmured against him...Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith...whereas before the 'justice of God' had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love"

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