

this is our God

Over the next four weeks, we will walk through Psalm 103 in a series called "This is our God." Psalm 103 describes God as He is, a good Father. He is our forgiveness, our healing, and our redemption. He is compassionate, merciful, slow to anger, filled with unfailing love; He is tender and compassionate. G. Campbell Morgan once described Psalm 103 by saying, "It is perhaps the most perfect song of pure praise to be found in the Bible." Today's study is titled: God of My Benefit.

Discussion Questions:

1. Looking back at your sermon notes, what encouraged or challenged you the most?

Read Psalm 103:1-5

2. In verses 1 and 2, as we see throughout the Psalms, David is speaking to himself. We can imagine him looking into a mirror and giving his heart a pep talk. When did you last find yourself praising God without needing any pep talk? When are you tempted to praise God with less than "all" your heart?

Psalm 13:6, "I will sing to the Lord because he is good to me."

3. Life comes at us pretty fast most of the time. Why, at times, does it take intentionality to fire up our praise to God? What do we learn from these first two verses regarding our mind's role in leading our hearts? What can this look like practically?

Derek Kidner writes, "[This] is not the only instance of a psalmist's rousing of himself to shake off apathy or gloom (e.g., 108:1; 42:5; 77:6), using his mind and memory to kindle his emotions. And there is fuel enough in verses 2-5 for more than kindling."

4. In verses 3-5, David praises God for five specific "good things" God does for His children. Review your sermon notes, reflect on these benefits, and consider: Why and when are we most tempted to forget them personally and when we view the lives of others?
 - 1) God forgives our iniquities.
 - 2) God heals from diseases.
 - 3) God redeems our life from the pit.
 - 4) God crowns us with steadfast love and mercy.
 - 5) God satisfies us with good things.

Five Benefits of God in Our Life

- **He forgives our iniquities.**
 - Only God can forgive sins.
 - Anyone who will turn to Jesus in repentance and faith can find forgiveness for their sin.
 - God's single, most significant benefit for you is the forgiveness of sins.
- **He heals from diseases.**
 - According to scholars, the diseases in mind here appear tied to sin. God has forgiven their iniquities and healed the associated illness.
 - It's essential to note that not all diseases are tied to someone's sin.
 - Some of you have known people God did not heal.
 - Some of you may be living with a disease, and, to this point, God has not healed you.
 - So how are we to understand this passage?
 - John MacArthur is helpful here when he says this is not a promise but a testimony about what God can do. He quotes, "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand" (Deuteronomy 32:29).
 - We need to remember that any time there is healing, God is behind it.
 - God may use a doctor or medicine, He may use chemo or radiation, He may supernaturally heal in a moment, but all healing is from God!
 - Most importantly, God heals our ultimate disease: sin and death.
- **He redeems our life from the pit.**
 - To redeem means to rescue and protect. God is the One who provides rescue and protection in our lives.
 - The pit is another word for death or rock bottom moments in your life.
 - You often learn more in the pit of life than you do at the pinnacle of life.
 - See Psalm 40:1-3.
- **He crowns us with steadfast love and mercy.**
 - Crowning carries the idea of giving a blessing or honor.
 - Psalm 103 echoes the truth that if you know Jesus, you have been crowned by God's steadfast love and mercy.
 - Out of all that the Lord could have said, He identifies you and says that you are a recipient of MY love and MY mercy.
 - If you're a Christian, the crowning achievement of your life isn't something you've achieved – it's something you've received due to God's steadfast love and mercy: salvation in Jesus.
- **He satisfies us with good.**
 - The Lord has abundantly cared for David.
 - We've been lavishly and abundantly given the mercy and love of God.
 - See 1 John 3:1 and James 1:17-19.

5. The discipline of gratitude, Henri Nouwen writes, "is the explicit effort to acknowledge that all I am and have is given to me as a gift of love, a gift to be celebrated with joy." In verse 5, what results does David's intentional praise have on his heart? Similarly, what does Paul say about the power of praise in Philippians 4:4-8?

The result of reflecting, with gratitude, on the benefits God has poured out on His children is the renewal of youth. In Psalm 13:5-6 we read, "But I trust in your unfailing love. I will rejoice because you have rescued me. I will sing to the Lord because he is good to me." Indeed, He is good to us. Reflecting on His goodness renews our spirit.

6. What's one personal takeaway from today's study you can focus on applying in your life this week?