

Revelling in God's love

Psalm 103

The title I've been asked to speak on this morning is: "Revel in God's Love." And so to begin, let me ask you this. What does God's love mean to you? When you're thinking about God's love, does it stir up something from deep within your soul? Does it move you deeply? Are you revelling in God's love this morning?

Our Psalm is a Psalm of David - and if you look at it, David begins by commanding his soul to praise God, and then he tells himself not to forget all the good things that God does. He says in v. 1:

"Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name" (v. 1).

And so David speaks to his soul - his mind, his will and emotions. He's speaking to his inmost being - all that's within him, and exhorting himself to praise God. And then as if once wasn't enough, he says it again in v. 2: "Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

You know, when we're revelling in God's love, we can't help but praise Him - because that's what we've been created for. We've been created "...to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever," (WSC Q1)... We've been made to worship and to delight in God's love, and this is what we see David doing in Psalm 103 - where he begins by urging his own soul to praise God, and by the end he's telling the heavenly hosts and the angels to praise God as well. David serves as an example, showing us what it looks like to be revelling in God's love. And that's what our Father wants for all of us - He wants us to revel in His love. But if we're honest, maybe for some of us, revelling in God's love isn't a present experience right now. Maybe you aren't delighting in God as much as you'd like to be - that's often the case for myself! And so why is that? Well, one reason that we can find from our Psalm, is this: We are forgetful. We aren't revelling in God's love because we have a tendency to forget all the good things that He's does for us. We often take what God does for granted... It's precisely for the reason that we're forgetful that David says in v. 2: *"...forget not all his benefits."*

So for those of us who aren't revelling in God's love, maybe that's the reason - because we're forgetful. Because right now, in this moment, we're failing to truly acknowledge all the good things that God has done and is doing. We forget we're forgiven. We forget we're redeemed. We forget we have a Father in heaven who loves to satisfy our desires... We need to remember these things again ... because when we forget, what happens is we stop living as sons and daughters of God (even though that is who we are), and instead we end up living as though we're still slaves. When we forget, we stop living in the freedom that Jesus died to bring us... And so brothers and sister, this morning there is a call for us to remember... because for us to revel in God's love, we need to remember God's kindness, and we need to remember who God is. So we're simply going to work our way through some of these benefits laid out in this Psalm and allow God's word to speak to us. But before we go on, let's pray.

Our Father, as we remind ourselves of all the good things that you do for us right now, would you set our hearts on fire with love for you. Holy Spirit would you come and guide us into all truth. Give us wisdom and understanding, and set us free so that we can revel in the Father's love. We pray this in Jesus' name, amen.

Well, if we look at vv. 3-5, we can see the benefits that David writes down which we are to remember. He says in v. 3, that God "...forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases." And so we need to remember that we are forgiven... I want to spend a bit of time on this, because you know, so many Christians actually struggle to receive God's forgiveness - because when they struggle to forgive themselves, they end up believing that God won't forgive them either. Now, we have a very real enemy, who is the devil. In Revelation 12:10 he's called the accuser, and it says that he accuses God's people day and night. He's called the father of lies, and he feeds on condemnation and fuels on shame. He loves it - because when we feel shame, we struggle to receive God's forgiveness, and when we hold onto shame, we stop ourselves from living under God's grace and encountering God's love. That's why it's so important for us to believe that we've been forgiven. We need to believe that when Jesus was on that cross and he said "It is finished," (John 19:30), that he paid for all our sin - past, present and future, and because of that "...there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus," (Rom 8:1). The devil wants us to feel shame and condemnation, because when we do, we end up hiding from God, just like Adam and Eve did, and it's impossible to revel in God's love when we are hiding from him. Instead -

when we do sin and when we stumble, whether it's simply missing the mark or direct disobedience, God wants us to go to Him so that He can forgive us and cleanse us. God is always ready to forgive. Just think of the father in the story of the prodigal son. That's the Father heart of God. He's always ready to welcome us back and He chooses to remember our sins no more (Isa 43:25; Heb 8:12). Just take a look at vv. 8-12. It says:

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbour his anger for ever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

And so God isn't counting our sins, but He chooses not to remember them. He's not looking for reasons to tell us off! It says in Micah 7:18-19 that God "...does not retain His anger forever, because He [constantly delights in mercy and lovingkindness. He shall again have compassion on us."

Now there are times when we may find it hard to receive God's forgiveness, and often it's because we know that what we did was wrong. There have definitely been things that i've done that i'm not proud of. In fact, there are still times when I do things that i'm not proud of - and i'm not just saying that because i'm imperfect, but it's actually because there are times when my heart can just be so sick. There will also be times when the enemy says: "Wow Yein, you just messed up again. You just blew it big time... You call yourself a Christian? Do you really think God can love someone like you? Why would God wants someone like you to serve Him?"

And you know what? I'm so glad that none of you can mind read - because if you could see every single one of my thoughts, sometimes even just for one minute, you would not like what you see. If you knew just how corrupt my heart can sometimes become, you'd probably be disgusted. You probably wouldn't like me, you wouldn't love me, you wouldn't want to be around me. I am a sinner, in need of God's mercy and compassion. I am a sinner, in need of a saviour! "I am a sinner." I wonder how many of you can relate to that? Now none of you can see the condition of my heart, but God does - because nothing is hidden from Him. He looks at me and sees how messed up I can be. But because of the finished work of the cross, because I've put my trust in Jesus,

even though I'm a sinner, God looks at me, and says that I am beautiful. And if you've put your trust in Jesus, even though you may still fall into sin, God looks at you, and says: "You are beautiful." That's what it means to be justified by faith. It's not only that we're saved from the penalty of sin, but God also declares us as righteous because the righteousness of Jesus is accounted to us. God looks upon us in the same way that He looks upon Jesus. He covers us with the robe of righteousness (Isa 61:10), He looks upon us with favour, and He says to His Church, His Bride: "You are beautiful." He forgives all my sins.

And then it says that He "Heals all your diseases," (v. 3). This includes diseases of the body, but also diseases of the soul, since scripture often refers to sin as a disease that we need to be healed from. Now you might be wondering what this actually means, because there are times when we want God to heal, but it just doesn't happen. But listen to what it says in 2 Corinthians 4:16. It says: "Do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day." Jesus is in the process of making all things new! For those of us who've put our trust in Jesus, he's already removed our hearts of stone and given us a heart of flesh (Ezek 36:26). We now have a heart that can actually feel God's love. A heart in which Christ is pleased to inhabit. We've become a new creation, and Jesus is transforming us from the inside out to make us more like him. So that's the disease of the soul. But as for physical disease, we need to remember that our ultimate hope is not a perfect body on earth, but our hope is heaven. Now I do believe that God heals today (100%), and that's because He does. I also believe that we should be obedient by praying for healing, but the thing is that God's will isn't to give us our best life now, but it's to conform us more and more to the image of Christ. He can even use a disease to work on your character, but ultimately He's going to set you free from it, because you're either going to get healed, or you're going to die and then get healed. It says in 1 Corinthians 15:42 that one day we'll be given spiritual bodies that will be raised imperishable and immortal - and we can look forward to that. And so God heals all our diseases. Let's move on.

In v. 4, it says that God "...redeems your life from the pit of death." Some of the paraphrases put it very bluntly and say that He save us from hell. I know that it may not be popular today, but it's true. There is a place called hell. But for the Christian the only hell we'll ever experience is this life today. And so what a benefit it is, that God forgives my sins, He heals all my diseases and He redeems my soul from destruction. But that isn't all. It goes on to say that He "...crowns

[us] with love and compassion.” God lavishes us with His steadfast love and compassion. The picture we’re given in v. 13 is that God’s compassion for us is like how a father has compassion on his children. And then it says in v. 17 that God’s steadfast love is “...from everlasting to everlasting.”

And so God loves us. There’s nothing that we can ever do that’ll make Him change His mind...He crowns us with love and compassion, and His love for us is from everlasting to everlasting. Surely His goodness and love will follow us for all the days our lives,” (Psalm 23:6).

So just like David, may we exhort ourselves to praise God. May we take time to reflect on all the good things that God has done for us. And may we find ourselves revelling in His love. Amen