

For What Do We Give Thanks?

Psalm 103

Last week we focused on *why* giving thanks to God makes sense: While Satan afflicts the world with sin and misery, God provides hope and joy, even in difficult times. In those times, for *what* do we give thanks? This isn't just a psychological game: God's provisions are *real!*

- An outburst of praise! (1-5)
- God's Compassionate Grace (6-18)
 - *Demonstrated in the nation of Israel (6-8)*
 - *Demonstrated in forgiveness of sin (9-12)*
 - *Demonstrated in faithful love (13-18)*
- God's Sovereign Power (19-22)

Praise the LORD, O my soul, and
forget not all his benefits —
who forgives all our sins and
heals all our diseases...

- Psalm 103:2-3 -



Digging Deeper

1. One of our very human failings is neglecting to say “Thank you” to those who have done something for us. Why do you think this is so? Now let’s bring this over into the spiritual realm: How often do you give thanks to the Lord – really pause in the rush and tumble of life to say “Thank you, Lord...”? Why do we so often neglect to do this?
2. Romans 1.18-32 exhibits the progressive depravity of those who reject God, and the resulting wrath of God which they receive. It begins with a failure to give thanks. Verses 19-21 state that God’s power and goodness are evident in creation, but ungodly men do not give thanks, and this leads to greater sin. Do you think Christians can be negatively affected spiritually by a failure to give thanks?
3. Scripture often commands us to “Give thanks to the Lord!” From the dawn of creation through the New Testament, thanksgiving is given to God in sacrifices, rituals, songs of worship and praise, and prayer. As Christians, we are exhorted to give thanks to the Lord (Eph. 5.20; Col. 3.17; 1 Thess. 5.18; Heb. 13.15). Assuming that God has a good purpose in all that He urges us to do, why do you think it is so vital throughout Scripture for God’s people to be giving thanks?
4. When you give thanks (not counting before meals), what do you thank God for? Psalm 103.3-5 is a personal ‘eruption’ of thanks by David for God’s “benefits” in his life. Reflect on each line in these verses: What is their significance in David’s life? Now change each “your” in these verses to “my”: How do these expressions of thanks apply in your life? What attributes of God are implicit here?
5. In verses 6-18, David has God’s dealings with the nation of Israel in view, how He cared for them, forgave their sin, and showed fatherly compassion to them. How has God done that in your life? Have you thanked Him for that?
6. This psalm begins and ends with “Bless the Lord, O my soul!” What does it mean to “bless” someone? When we “bless” God, what does that say about Him? What does it show about us?