

BLESS THE LORD O MY SOUL! (Slide 1)

**Psalm 103:1-12
August 21, 2022**

As I begin my sermon, I would like to share with you a few things that really annoy me, none of which are related to any person in this Church. If you hear something that sounds like you – don't be paranoid – it's not!

- I get annoyed when I'm in a restaurant or a store or God forbid even on the golf course, and people are having a conversation on their cellphone so loud that you can hear every word they are shouting. I have no option but to hear their conversation and I think most people share far too much information when in public.
- I get annoyed it when I'm in a restaurant and people are repeatedly taking selfies and pictures of their food. Food is meant to be eaten and enjoyed not photographed from several different angles while the meal gets cold. Someone recently told me that they take photos for artistic reasons-who am I to argue with that?
- I get annoyed when I pull into a parking lot, and someone has straddled two parking spots instead of using one. I also get annoyed when great big trucks park in spots that are in place to accommodate small cars.
- I get annoyed, in the grocery store, when I'm in the express line for ten items and the person ahead of me has twenty or more.
- I get annoyed when I call businesses, it seems no one answers the phone anymore and I am advised to go to www...I don't want to go to www...I want to talk to a real person-that is why I called.
- I get annoyed when I receive phone call after phone call telling me that the CRA is after me and I must press a specific number, or they will come and arrest me.
- I get annoyed when I'm on the highway, obeying the speed limit and someone zooms by me at twice the posted limit. It also annoys me when people move into the fast lane and then slow down.

- I get annoyed when people break their word to me.
- I get annoyed when I receive poor service in a restaurant, and they still expect me to give them a generous tip!
- I get annoyed when I can't get my pillow in the right position when I'm trying to go to sleep.
- I am annoyed that my friend Lisa Laflamme is no longer doing the CTV news, because God forbid her hair went grey. It took me three years to get over Lloyd Robertson retiring. **(RIP UP PAPER)**
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I realize as I read this list of annoyances that I could very easily become a grumpy old man. Some of you might think I am one already! That's the one thing I promised myself I would never become. Instead, I want to be like my friend King David and live life as a person who takes the words of Psalm 103 to heart. **"BLESS THE LORD O MY SOUL AND ALL THAT IS WITHIN ME BLESS HIS HOLY NAME."** I want to live in that spirit – I want my mouth and my heart and my emotions to be filled with those life-giving words.

I would like to do a little experiment this morning. **(MOVE OVER TO RIGHT HAND PEWS AND SAY: "BLESS THE LORD O MY SOUL AND ALL THAT IS WITHIN ME BLESS HIS HOLY NAME" – (congregation responds) REPEAT IN CENTRE AISLE, LEFT HAND SIDE AISLE AND THEN AT THE BACK OF THE CHURCH.)** For some of you, that may have been a little stretching because it may not seem like right and proper worship, but I want you to know that it is the Anglicans not the Nazarenes who have laid claim to the title **"THE FROZEN CHOSEN."** You need to know that I am a firm believer that worship should be done decently and in good order. Jesus said that the Father wants His people to worship Him in **Spirit and in Truth.** But I also believe God wants us to worship Him with

joyful enthusiasm. That doesn't mean you need to worship Him with your hands in the air or jumping up and down in the aisle. However, I am also very encouraged when people worship with their hands in the air, clap and jump up and down in the aisle - especially children.

Look at the text and see the words that David uses. **BLESS THE LORD O MY SOUL.** David is speaking to his soul and he's calling his soul into the very act of worship. This Psalm is asking God for absolutely nothing. Psalms 103, 104 and 105 are not Psalms of request – they are Psalms of gratitude and thanksgiving to God. In Psalm 103 David wants to ***Bless the Lord*** and he wants to do it using his emotions, his mind, and his heart. We need to let our imagination, our affections, our desires, our memories, our thoughts, our hopes – let our whole being bless Him and fill our mouths with words of praise. David doesn't want his worship to be merely empty gestures, he wants it to be passionate even though he may not feel like it when he begins but he is going to do it anyway. ***“BLESS THE LORD O MY SOUL AND ALL THAT IS WITHIN ME, BLESS HIS HOLY NAME”.***

I have discovered in recent years that it is very easy to become a miserable person. It doesn't take much effort, but it also doesn't take much energy to go in the opposite direction. A couple of months ago I decided that before I fall asleep, after I say my prayers, I begin reciting what I am thankful for that day. I confess, I fall asleep before I'm finished the things for which I am grateful, just for that one day. I began writing my sermon on Tuesday and on Tuesday these were some of the things that I was grateful for:

- I'm grateful that I was able to get out of bed each morning
- I'm grateful that I can have a shower with hot water

- I'm grateful that I have a toothbrush and toothpaste
 - I'm grateful that I could have anything I want for breakfast
 - I'm grateful for the medication that I have to take on a daily basis
 - I'm grateful that the weather is beautiful, and the sun is shining
 - I'm grateful that my tomato plants and my yellow beans are growing in the garden
 - I'm grateful that the garbage, the organics, and the recycling has all been taken away – have you ever given thanks for those employees
 - I am grateful that my grass was cut
 - I'm thankful as I'm working on this sermon that my wife is preparing supper and I can't even begin to tell you the number of things that Deirdre does for me on a daily basis for which I am very grateful. Quite honestly, she has spoiled me rotten. So, what do I do, I keep coming back for more. And she keeps giving me more. She is God's instrument of holiness, righteousness, and generosity in my life.
- “BLESS THE LORD O MY SOUL AND ALL THAT IS WITHIN ME
BLESS HIS HOLY NAME”***

David, in the next line of the Psalm says to us: **Bless the Lord, O my soul and do not forget all His benefits.** In Deuteronomy Chapter 8, God warned the Israelites when they moved into the promised land that they were not to forget their benefactor. He knows the dangers that lurk for the people of God when we are abundantly blessed. Here is what God said:

“Observe the commands of the LORD your God, walking in obedience to him...for the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land - a land with brooks, streams, and deep springs gushing out into the

valleys and hills; a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; a land where bread will not be scarce, and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron, and you can dig copper out of the hills.

When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws, and his decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God...You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today." (Deut. 8:6-18)

When was the last time you thanked God for giving you a home, a stove, a fridge, a freezer, a garage, a car, your mate, your pension, your children, and grandchildren, your computer, your cell phone? The list never ends. When was the last time you thanked God for everything that you have because it comes directly from His hands? As it says in the Book of Acts, **"for in Him we live and move and have our being."** Everything we have comes from His hand. Not only does everything we have belong to Him, but we also belong to Him. And God says, don't get lazy and take things for granted or forget His benefits. We are invited to bless God for His (Slide 2)

love, His forgiveness, His salvation, His kindness, His mercy, His justice, His patience, His tenderness - we receive all these things without deserving any of them. Although we live in a so-called age of entitlement, we are certainly not entitled to the things God has freely given to us. However, He simply bestows all these gifts on us just because He loves us. (Slide 3) **“BLESS THE LORD O MY SOUL AND ALL THAT IS WITHIN ME, BLESS HIS HOLY NAME.”**

In verse six, David writes: **“The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.”** We may think at times that the hand of justice moves, very slowly, but the great Preacher of the 18th century, Charles Spurgeon, reminds us: *“Man’s injustice shall receive retribution at the hand of God. Mercy of his saints demands vengeance on their persecutors and God alone will repay. No blood of martyrs shall be shed in vain; no groans in prison will be ignored. All wrongs will be righted, and all oppression shall be avenged.”* God Himself will take care of all these things. I think he lingers to give space for repentance and opportunity for others to accept His mercy and forgiveness.

I find it interesting in this Psalm, that David, who committed murder, is so conscious and grateful that God has forgiven all his sins. In verse three he says: (Slide 4) **“God forgives all your iniquity”** and in verse four that **“God redeems his life from the pit.”** But he doesn’t stop there he goes on to say in verses 10-12: (Slide 5)

“He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. (Slide 6) For as the heavens are high

above the earth, so great is his steadfast love towards those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us.” (10-12)

You do know that east and west never meet. Maybe there are people here this morning who need to be reminded of God’s Grace and Faithfulness. There are numerous Scriptures that tell us what God has done with our sins. I am very quickly going to give you ten and you will find all the references on the Church Web site before the week is over.

(Slide 7) First - He forgives our transgression (Ps. 32:1,5).

David sought and received God’s forgiveness. The Hebrew word for *forgiven* literally means **“lifted off.”** The image was portrayed in John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*. Bunyan’s protagonist, Christian, was weighed down by the burden of his sin. When he came to the cross, the sin burden fell from his shoulders, rolled down a hill, and disappeared into an empty tomb. Unconfessed sin is a burden that weighs us down. When we confess our sin to God, He lifts it off our shoulders, rolls it away, and it disappears.

(Slide 8) Second - He covers our sin (Ps. 32:1; Rom. 4:7).

This imagery is taken from the Day of Atonement. On this day, the high priest took blood from a sacrificial animal, carried it into the Most Holy Place, and sprinkled it on the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant (a chest that contained the Ten Commandments). The sprinkled blood symbolically covered the broken law and shielded the sinner from judgment.

It is significant that when David stopped trying to cover up his sin (v. 5), God “covered” it (v. 1). When something is covered, it’s hidden from view. God puts our sin out of His sight.

(Slide 9) Three - He does not charge us with iniquity (Ps. 32:2; Rom. 4:8).

This is what God does *not* do with our sin - He no longer counts our sin against us. “Charge” is a bookkeeping term. This is the imagery Paul used in Romans 4. God charges our sin to Jesus’ ledger (who bore our penalty) and writes Jesus’ righteousness into our ledger and credits us with His righteousness (Rom. 4:8-25).

(Slide 10) Four - He removes our sins from us (Ps. 103:12; John 1:29).

How far does God remove our sin from us? **“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.”**

(Slide 11) Five - He washes away our guilt and cleanses us from our sin (Ps. 51:2; Isa. 1:18; 1 John 1:9).

Sin leaves a mark or a stain only God can wipe away.

(Slide 12) Six - He throws all our sins behind His back (Isa. 38:17).

In a metaphorical sense, God puts all our sins behind His back so that He does not see them anymore.

(Slide 13) Seven - He sweeps away our transgressions (Isa 43:25; 44:22).

Our unconfessed sins hang over us like a dark cloud, but God promises to sweep them away like the rising sun burns away the morning mist (Isa. 44:22)

(Slide 14) Eight - He remembers our sins no more (Isa. 43:25; Jer. 31:34; Heb. 8:12; 10:16-17).

When God forgives our sins; He forgets them. I have not *forgotten* my sins and so I don't understand how God can **FORGET MY SINS**. Except God reminds me – I am **NOT** God, and He is, and He can **FORGET** what He wants to **FORGET** and that is our sins. That means He no longer holds our sins against us.

(Slide 15) Nine - He casts all our sins into the depths of the sea (Mic. 7:18-19).

God casts (hurls) our sins into the sea, where they sink like a stone. Such an act of grace caused Micah to ask, "Who is a God like you ...?" (Mic. 7:18).

(Slide 16) Ten - He nailed our sin debt to the cross (Col. 2:14).

God not only erases our sin debt, but He also destroys the document on which our debt was recorded by nailing it to the cross. We are forgiven because of the cross of Jesus.

What has happened is Jesus became sin so that we could become the righteousness of God. Jesus did not bear '**some**' sins, He bore '**all**' sins. Our past, our present and our future sins have been poured out on Christ. At the end of the age whenever that will be, God does not want anyone of us to be separated from Him. He yearns for us to be in a right relationship

with Him. He's not looking for excuses about why we can't come home - He just wants us to come home.

This past summer, I was given a gift of a book called (Slide 17) by Philip Yancy and the whole idea behind the book is that God forgives all our sins, and in turn calls on us to forgive others. If you only read one book this year, read ***The Scandal of Forgiveness***.

I love the fact that God doesn't keep track of our sins. Unfortunately, we do, and at times we torture ourselves for the wrongs that we have committed. Sometimes we tend to forget that our God is a loving God who not only forgives our iniquities, but He also heals our diseases and redeems our lives from the pit. I think a lot of people have forgotten that this world is not the be all or end all. There is another world where God wants us to live with Him forever. I remind people when I officiate at funerals that: (Slide 18) **"We are not the living going to the land of the dying. No, we are the dying, and we are going to the land of living."** People may hold grudges against others, and sometimes we hold grudges against ourselves, but God never, ever holds a grudge against His beloved sons and daughters. He is too compassionate and gracious. The Psalmist tells us that God doesn't treat us as our sins deserve, not even for a moment. There will come a day when all of us will realize that: (Slide 19) ***"No eye has seen, No ear has heard, No mind has conceived the things that God has prepared for those who love Him."*** (1st Cor 2:9)

In closing my brothers and sisters - all I can say is: (Slide 20) **"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name."**

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name.” “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name.”

References:

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