

## Praise and Thanksgiving

*Key Verse: "Let all that I am praise the Lord; with my whole heart, I will praise his holy name. Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things he does for me."*

*Psalm 103:1-2*

### A. INTRODUCTION

Within the book of Psalms, a total of 33 chapters are dedicated to Praise & Thanksgiving, offering a profound insight into the Psalmists' hearts and their earnest desire to shower blessings upon God. Among these poetic expressions of gratitude, Psalm 103 emerges as an exquisite anthem of praise in the Bible. David, its author, skilfully commences and concludes with a heartfelt call to his own soul, urging it to continually bless God – a poignant reminder that even the depths of his praise feel inadequate. These chapters serve as a resonant reminder, affirming and reinforcing the reasons why God is undeniably worthy of our unceasing praise and worship.

This session is written in the Bible Discovery style, so there is no Main Point, but the style allows each person to uncover the richness of the Psalm for themselves.

### B. WATCH VIDEO

1. Video: [INTRODUCTION to the Psalmify Series - Ps. Jonathan Mok](#) (3:50)

- Overview of the series and explains what we can expect in this series.
- This video, along with other resources from this study, can be shown in your connect group meeting, skipped, or shared via WhatsApp in your group chat.

2. Other video resources

- [Book of Psalms Summary: A Complete Animated Overview by Bible Project](#) (8:58)
- [The Book of Psalms by Bible Project \(shorter version, 5:29\)](#)

3. Key thoughts of this study:

- Praise as our response to who He is (Posture) - To juxtapose man against God will ultimately reveal the brevity of man. Before we can begin praise, we must first kneel before the King lest we make ourselves greater than Him.
- Praise as a reminder (Weapon) - Despite our circumstances, our praise and gratitude can help us stay the course.

- Praise as our purpose in life (Worship) - There is something in all of us those desires to worship, God calls us to direct it to Him as our purpose in life as a symbol of our faith and obedience to Him.
- Call to action

### C. BACKGROUND TO PSALM 103

In Psalm 103, the word which describes “Praise” (or “Bless”, depending on which translation you subscribe to), is known to be the Hebrew word *bāra*. This word is also used to describe the act of kneeling. This is a powerful picture of what it truly means to praise God, where we as His creation are called to humble ourselves before Him our creator. John the Baptist describes it this way: “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30). As we read through the Psalms, specifically 103, we can see that David’s view of himself is always exponentially lower than his view of God. This is fundamental because it reminds us that the only thing worthy of praise is found in a God who redeems, forgives, restores, loves and the list goes on. So, we as His creation, are called to praise with every part of our being, as our purpose and our response to our creator; but also as an expression of thankfulness as we remember who He is and what he’s done.

Moreover, we don’t know the circumstances in which the Psalm was written, but since David was a man who knew the grace and deliverance of God many times, it could have been written one of the many different times of his life.

However, Charles Spurgeon thought “We should attribute it to his later years when he had a higher sense of the preciousness of pardon, because a keener sense of sin, than in his younger days. His clear sense of the frailty of life indicates his weaker years, as also does the very fulness of his praiseful gratitude.”

### D. DISCOVER THE PSALM YOURSELF USING FOUR QUESTIONS

- 1. What do you see?**
- 2. What does this say about God?**
- 3. What does this say about us?**
- 4. What is God saying to you?**

Read [Psalm 103](#) and answer the following questions. Break into groups of 3-4 people so everyone has a chance to share their personal insights from Scripture.

- 1. Look**  
**What do you see?**

Read Psalm 103, and see which scriptures stand out to you or catch your attention?

**2. What does this say about God?**

Discuss what these scriptures say about God or his plan.

Answer Guide:

God is for us

- **Forgiveness of Sins:** The psalm acknowledges God's forgiveness of sins, stating that He does not treat us as our sins deserve but instead removes our transgressions from us.
- **Healing and Redemption:** The psalm speaks of God's healing and redemption, emphasizing His ability to restore and renew.

God is for Love

- **Compassion and Love (Hesed):** The psalm highlights God's compassion and love, comparing them to a father's love for his children. This description of love is also resonant of the God's Hesed love which is prominently featured throughout the Old Testament, illustrating God's steadfast love and faithfulness to His covenant with His people. David proclaims of God's steadfast love in verses 8 and 11 by contrasting against what His love is not; as seen in verse 9 and 10. Because He is compassionate, it shows that God is intimate and all-knowing and desires to see us redeemed.
- **God is a God of action:** David's description showcases the proactivity of God who will do anything it takes to pursue us and experience His love and hope. This is what makes the God of the Bible different to any other god. The God of the Bible is about God's pursuit of man, whereas every other religion is about man's pursuit of their god. Jesus was the ultimate demonstration of what we see David praise God about.
- **He is eternal:** In verse 17 we see that His love goes from everlasting to everlasting, which describes how consistent He is and unwavering His love is. But in order to truly experience this eternality of God's love, verse 11 calls us to revere Him by placing our faith in Him.

God is Sovereign (Sovereign: Possessing supreme or ultimate power)

God's sovereignty is established in the Psalm through various literary examples such as:

- **Forgiveness of sins (v 3, v 12)** — Only God can forgive sins
- **Heaven as his throne (v 19)** — Signifies His status which is infinitely higher than what we can achieve on our own

- Angels worship Him (v 21) — Angelic worship underscores the recognition of God's supreme sovereignty and authority. By worshiping God, angels acknowledge His position as the Creator and Ruler of the universe.
- Created everything (v 22) — The act of creation establishes God as the ultimate authority and source of all power. By creating the universe, God demonstrates His unmatched sovereignty over all existence.

Ultimately praises are proclaimed because of who God is, what He's for and what He's done to give salvation to a broken people.

### **3. What does this say about the people (us)?**

Read the passage once more. Discuss what this passage says about people (us).

Answer Guide:

- We are sinful and need his mercy (v 14) "for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust."

This verse acknowledges the human condition, emphasizing the frailty and mortality of individuals. It suggests that God, in His mercy, understands the limitations and weaknesses of human beings.

- We are here today, gone tomorrow (v 16) David describes how fleeting our lives are, and if not for the intervention of God, we would be subject to an eternity of suffering.
- We were created to bless God (v 1) David begins and ends with an exhortation to his soul to praise the Lord, as if it wasn't doing it enough.
- We are his Children (v 13) Because we are his beloved, He wants the best for us; where our best is found where He is.
- We are blessed Throughout the Psalm it's quite clear that we serve a God who gives. He fills our lives with good things (v 5) but also gives us what we truly need that can't be found in this world. David proclaims that he hopes to never forget how good his God is to him.

### **4. What is God saying to you?**

According to this Psalm, what am I doing well? What do I need to change?

For further reading see Psalm 30:11-12 and Phil 4:8. (Prompt: What's one thing about God that you want to remember more about and why?)

Answer Guide:

This is a good opportunity to let everyone share one thing about how they praise God and something that can inhibit them from praise or thanking God.

As it says in Psalms 30, let's take our brokenness and trade it for the joy of the Lord. Praise is your weapon! Spend some time identifying areas in your life that you need to give up to the Lord and replace it with whatever is pure, love, admirable, excellent or praiseworthy.

## **E. SUMMARY**

The facilitator can wrap up the discussion section which may include the following points:

- Praise is more than just the words used to encourage and more than our outward expression of excitement. It's ultimately an act of reverence to an almighty God.
- Our outward expression of praise towards God can be a powerful act of faith and trust towards God, especially in the face of adversity.
- So we must take up a posture of praise on a daily basis!

## **F. PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, Blessed be Your holy name, O Lord, for You are compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in love (Psalm 103:8). As I come before Your presence, I praise You for Your immeasurable mercy that reaches to the heavens. Thank You for not treating me as my sins deserve but for graciously forgiving and removing my transgressions as far as the east is from the west. Your love, described as a father's compassion for his children, assures me of Your intimate understanding of my weaknesses (Psalm 103:13-14).

I seek the strength to fear You, to walk in Your ways, and to keep Your covenant. Lord, help me tune my mind to the soundtrack of Your grace and drown out the broken soundtracks that seek to discourage and limit me. May Your righteousness guide my steps, and in moments of weakness, remind me of Your eternal love that endures from everlasting to everlasting (Psalm 103:17). I surrender my worries, fears, and overthinking to You, trusting in

Your sovereignty and guidance. Thank You for being my refuge and strength, surrounding me with Your steadfast love. In the name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.