

PSALM 103 - HOW TO HAVE A GOOD DAY

Video – Wrong Side of the Bed. Have you ever had one of those days where it just seems like you got up on the wrong side of the bed? OK, so maybe you did not have a porcupine that wanted to snuggle or an octopus that stole all your matching socks, but it just seemed like nothing went right for you. It just seemed like a black cloud followed you around all day?

Today we are continuing in our series Godsong looking at the psalms. What I want to talk about this morning is How to Have a Good Day. Is it possible to rise above whatever circumstances the world may throw at us and still have a good day? To make the decision to stay positive even when everything around you seems negative? Psalm 103 shows us how to do this.

Psalms 103:1-22 Of David. Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. 2 Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits -- 3 who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, 4 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, 5 who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. 6 The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. 7 He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: 8 The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. 9 He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; 10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. 13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; 14 for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. 15 As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field; 16 the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. 17 But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children-- 18 with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts. 19 The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. 20 Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. 21 Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will. 22 Praise the LORD, all his works everywhere in his dominion. Praise the LORD, O my soul.

Do you want to rise above the circumstances and still have a good one? The first few verses of this psalm tell us there are three simple steps to guarantee you have a good day:

1. Start your day with Wonder - (v. 1).

David starts by reminding himself of what is important. He says, "Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name." He's telling himself what to do. He says to himself 'Praise the Lord.' Not just a shallow or superficial praise, but worship that flows out of the very depth of who he is. He says Praise the Lord, *O my soul*. What is your soul? Your soul means your inmost being. It is the core of who you are as a person. When you make the decision to start your day with worship, you are saying that you are putting God first. You are making Him priority. You let that worship flow from the very heart of who you are as a person. Start your day off right by focusing your attention on God first.

Why is this important? Because the mind can really only focus on one thing at a time. If you are focusing your mind and heart on God then you will not be focusing it on yourself and your problems.

When you start your day off focusing on God, worshipping God, then it puts all your other cares and concerns into perspective. It makes them secondary issues. It removes the pain in your stomach, the hate in your heart, or anything else that might trouble you and keep you from having a good day. How do you have a good day? Start it off with God and how great He is. That is what David does. He starts his day off with wonder. What does wonder mean? It is defined as the feeling of surprise mingled with admiration, caused by something beautiful, unexpected, unfamiliar or inexplicable. It means getting so caught up with something that it completely consumes your attention and emotion.

A woman entered a Haagen-Dazs store on the Kansas City Plaza for an ice-cream cone. After making her selection, she turned and found herself face to face with Paul Newman. He was in town filming a movie. Newman's blue eyes caused her knees to buckle. She managed to pay for her cone, then left the shop, heart pounding. When she gained her composure, she realized she didn't have her cone. She went back to the store to get it and met Newman at the door. "Are you looking for your ice-cream cone?" he asked. She nodded, unable to speak. "You put it in your purse with your change."

A.W. Tozer wrote "What is worship? Worship is to feel in your heart and express in some appropriate manner a humbling but delightful sense of admiring awe and astonished wonder and overpowering love in the presence of that most ancient Mystery, that Majesty which philosophers call the First Cause, but which we call Our Father Which Are in Heaven."

When was the last time the presence of God so captured your focus? Start the day with wonder. Give God your attention and emotion.

2. Start your day with Worship - (v. 2a).

David says again in verse 2 "Praise the LORD, O my soul." Sometimes we turn to God in prayer, but we still make it all about us. We go to God with our concerns and requests and never really let the focus rise beyond our own needs and wants. That is not what David is doing here. Here is starting with worship. Worship is recognizing who God is. It is God directed and God focused. It is getting your eyes off of yourself and on to God.

The word used here for praise (or bless in the KJV) is the Hebrew word BARAK which comes from the word to kneel. It is an act of adoration, it is placing your body in the position of your heart, bowing down before the goodness and greatness of God.

Worship is about God, not about you. Imagine going to a birthday party for someone and then complaining that you did not get any presents and that no one sang to you. That would be silly. Of course you were not the focus. The party was not for you, it was for the other person.

Is that not what happens in worship all the time? This is especially true of church. We say we are worshipping but our focus is on ourselves, on the songs that are sung, or the volume they are sung at, or the person singing next to us ...

I love the worship in our church, but there are still those who would love it if the worship was more one way or the other. Either more traditional or more contemporary. I love the old hymns, but I also love new music. I love it when we introduce a new song and it just touches your heart. For me it is not about the style, it is about Jesus.

Judson Cornwall once said “Whenever the method of worship becomes more important than the Person of worship, we have already prostituted our worship. There are entire congregations who worship praise and praise worship but who have not yet learned to praise and worship God in Jesus Christ.”

In Kuwait I would often speak in a variety of different churches. Whether it was Tamil or Hindi or Mandarin or Urdu or Farsi. The style and beat was different, but always it was a decision to worship.

Have you ever been sitting in the break room at work or somewhere during lunchtime with your friend or co-worker, and begin to eat your lunch that you brought from home? Your friend or co-worker’s lunch is made from homemade fluffy bread, that’s a two-hander meal, stacked with fresh lettuce, chopped tomatoes, slices of cheddar cheese with a dill pickle on the side... Not to mention the side items of a small dish of macaroni salad, chopped fruit and topped off with a slice of cake. Your lunch is just a couple of pieces of flattened bread with peanut butter and jelly oozing out and a stale bag of chips that has been hiding in the back of your pantry for 3 years. As you look at their lunch, and discretely wipe the drool from the corner of your mouth, you let out a silent sigh, and munch down on your quick-grab lunch.

Many times when we come to church, we just slap ourselves together. We come to church to expect something to wow us, just as you were "wowed" with your co-workers carefully prepared lunch. We need to do more than just the "grab n' go" when it comes to worshipping our God. We need to prepare our hearts. We need to come ready to worship. When you come with your heart prepared your focus is not the music but the Master.

William Temple said, "To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God."

Start your day with wonder, let God capture your heart and mind. Start your day with worship, give him all your attention and admiration.

3. Start your day with Witness - (v. 2b).

A witness is simply someone who recounts what they have seen and heard. If you witness a crime, you may have to go to court and then tell the judge what you saw and heard. You just tell him your experience of that incident.

David ends verse 2 saying “Praise the Lord O my soul ... AND forget not all his benefits.” He is calling to remembrance everything that God has done for him. You can be a witness for God to others, telling them about the goodness of God. However, you can also be a witness to yourself, reminding yourself and calling to remembrance the goodness and glory of God to yourself. David is starting his day not simply with attention and adoration but with thanksgiving. Again, the focus is on who God is and what He has done for us. What has God done for you? The next 3 verses reminds us of some of the things God has done for us;

Psalm 103:3 who *forgives* all your sins and *heals* all your diseases, 4 who *redeems* your life from the pit and *crowns* you with love and compassion, 5 who *satisfies* your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

We see here 5 things that God has done for us. He has forgiven you, healed you, redeemed you, crowned you and satisfied you. Some people like to recite the names of God. David gives us five of them right here.

a. God is Jehovah Salach – He forgives me.

David knew what it was like to need forgiveness. He had committed adultery and had killed the husband of the woman he had seduced. In another psalm he says, “My sin is ever before me.” Do you know what that feels like? David says, “The Lord forgives [present tense] all my sins.” How many of my sins does he forgive? All of them. We receive the blessing of that forgiveness when we ask.

1Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Have you ever had a huge weight lifted off you? You know what a relief it is. After I hurt my hand I would go to Physio. I would have to wrap my fingers to force them to bend – it was very painful. I would sit there in pain and then the wrapping would come off and BAM – what a relief!

Heb 12:1 tells us to throw off everything that hinders. Imagine carrying a heavy backpack. It makes doing anything difficult. When you let it fall from you BAM – what a relief. If you wake up in the morning and praise God for forgiving you, you’re going to have a lighter day. That may sound simple but it is true. Try it tomorrow morning, and see if it doesn’t work for you!

You know how your mom taught you to say, *please* and *thank you*? “May I please have a cookie?” “Thank you for giving me a cookie.” We should say please and thank you to everyone - except God. With him, we start with *thank you*, and then we say *please*. With God, you don’t start with *asking*, you start with *thanking*. Because he has already done so much for you. Praise the Lord, O my soul! Praise Jehovah Salach, who forgives me, every morning, every evening, every day. Amen?

b. God is Jehovah Rapha – He heals me.

God is healing you right now. Our bodies are constantly being healed. Rub your arm for a second. You know what you just did? You just deposited over one hundred thousand dead skin cells on the floor. Our bodies are in a constant state of decay. They are also in constant state of rejuvenated and renewal. This is how God created us. Biology tells us that about every seven years, every cell in your body is replaced by a completely new one.

Imagine if our bodies did not heal. If every cut, every infection, everything that happened to us in life was permanent? Praise God because He is Jehovah Rapha, the Lord who heals us. He is healing you today, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

c. God is Jehovah Ga’al – He redeems me

To redeem means to be bought back. Do you know what it means to be redeemed?

Have you ever watched the *Father of the Bride* movies? In the second movie, George and Nina decide that now that their kids are grown, they are going to move to a smaller place. They are going to

downsize. So they sell their house to a guy who is going to tear it down and build two smaller houses in its place. Then they discover that Nina is pregnant again. They can't stand the idea of this new baby growing up in any house other than the one they raised their first two kids in, so George goes to the business guy and says, "I want to buy my house back." The guy says, "Sure. I'll sell it to you for twice what I paid for it." George can't believe it. But he pays the double price because he can't stand the thought of his youngest child growing up anywhere other than their family home.

The Bible says that Jesus bought us back at a huge price. Far more than double our worth. Even though He created us, we ran from God. We sold ourselves to someone who only wants to tear us down and destroy us. So God bought us back. He paid for us a second time. He redeemed us.

d. God is Jehovah Atar – He encircles me

Jehovah Atar is the Lord who encircles me. It says that God "crowns you with love and compassion." The word for crown in Hebrew is ATAR – to encircle. A crown is a circle. God has encircled me with his love. I am surrounded by it. Imagine a dad grabbing his toddler and throwing his arms around them and squeezing them for all his worth. That is what our heavenly Father does to us. He encircles us with his love. He wraps His big arms around us and encircles us.

e. God is Jehovah Saba – He satisfies me

God is the God who satisfies us. Isn't that good news? When was the last time you were really thirsty and you finally were able to get a big gulp of your favourite drink? Remember that feeling? That AHHHHH – sense of satisfaction. There was an old commercial for ice tea that the person would have a drink and then fall backwards into the water. That kind of feeling.

The Rolling Stones' best-selling song chorus was, "I can't get no... satisfaction. And I try and I try and I try and I try, but I can't get no..." You want to get some satisfaction? Every morning, wake up and worship Jehovah Saba', the one who satisfies. You'll never be satisfied when you concentrate on satisfying yourself. You can try and try and try... But here's the secret: it is impossible for the human mind to think two thoughts at the same time. You can't do it. And you can't feel two feelings at the same time. So when you wake up and thank God, you feel thankful. When you're feeling thankful, you can't be feeling sad.

Here's the principle: You can't think two thoughts at the same time. You can't feel two feelings at the same time. When you're feeling *thankful*, you can't be feeling *sad*. David starts by telling himself to do something that he probably wasn't naturally inclined to do, which was think about someone other than himself. He commands himself to think about God, first thing.

Do you want to have a good day? Start it with these three simple steps. Start your day with wonder, fill your mind with God and who He is. Start your day with worship, by making God your focus and praising Him. Start your day with witness, by reminding yourself of all that God has done for you.

The morning is the gate of the day, and should be well-guarded with prayer. The morning is one end of the thread on which the day's actions are strung, and should be well-knotted with devotion. If we felt more the majesty of life, we should be more careful of its mornings."

The first hour of the morning is the rudder of the day -- Henry Ward Beecher

I know for some people this is a challenge. Sometimes there are so many things happening and life is so busy that finding those moments to just spend with God are difficult. Make it a priority.

One morning there was a terrible snowstorm and there was a mother of three small children outside shoveling snow out of the driveway. A neighbor also shoveling snow at the same time yelled over to her, "Why isn't your husband outside helping you with this chore?" Well, she said, "Someone needed to stay inside with the kids and so we drew straws to see who would go outside and shovel snow." So the neighbor said, "Well, I'm sorry about your bad luck." She replied, "Don't feel sorry for me, I won."

Can any of relate to that? Take the time to start the day right.