

“Count Your Blessings” (hymn, c. 1897) good advice against discouragement since we are prone to forget them. Psa 103 aims elsewhere: to stir our praise to the LORD who gives them to us. More important than our feelings. Forgetting His benefits dampens our praise, inflames our pride, and tempts us to apostasy from God altogether (cf. Deut 8.10, 11, 14, 17–20; cf. Psa 9.17). The godly heart resolves to remember and meditate (Psa 77.11, 12).

Psa 103 urges praise at the remembrance of His “benefits” (2a). Most of the psalm is a rehearsal of those specific benefits. It starts with self-talk: O my soul, praise the Lord for His benefits to you personally (1-5). This widens to rehearse benefits to all His covenant people to stir us all to praise (6-18). The psalm’s climax is an appeal for the angels and all creatures under His sovereign rule to praise Him (19-22).

To “bless” the LORD here means to praise Him, “to speak words of excellence” about Him. He cannot be “blessed” by us in the sense of *benefiting* from us, since He is totally, eternally self-sufficient. He is the source and supply of all good in and to His creatures. All benefit of creatures’ relationship to God is to creatures only, not God. He acts in perfect love and self-giving from the perfect plenitude of His glorious Being without any advantage or improvement whatsoever to Him. To bless Him, then, is only to praise Him. Only *we are* benefited in the act.

.....  
*Remember His benefits and bless the LORD.*  
 .....

### I. O MY SOUL, REMEMBER AND BLESS THE LORD (1-5)

“A Psalm of David” (title), likely composed by David. Self-talk, common in Psa. “Bless” 3x (emphasis, hint of Trinitarianism?) in 1-2a. “O my soul” a heartfelt exhortation: serious, earnest, resolute. “All that is within me” = the whole man (Mark 12.30). Only such worship has His promise of blessing (Deut 4.29). A divided heart, a double-minded man, cannot expect the Lord’s favor (Hos 10.2; Jas 1.8). “Bless” 3x in 20-22 plus one to repeat v. 1.

*Remembering* His past benefits to you begins vibrating the strings of your heart and tuning it to play the holy music (2a). Immediately following this is a list of six benefits: forgiveness AND healing (3), eternal life AND His covenant love and mercy (4), satisfaction AND perpetual renewal (5).

These have their supreme display, **FIRST**, in THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: 1) Though He bore our sins on the cross, He procured **forgiveness** for them. 2) Though killed, He was **resurrected**. 3) Though temporarily forsaken, He **bears divine wrath no more**. 4) He fulfilled the messianic mission and now **receives the inheritance promised** to Him by the Father. 5) He now has **“the joy that was set before Him”** (Heb 12.2). 6) He possesses and displays **the fullness of God’s blessing** in His Person forever and ever.

**SECOND**, to YOU as one IN UNION WITH CHRIST: 1) Your own sins are truly **forgiven**. 2) Your **healings** are from Him, and ultimately, your bodily resurrection. 3) You now have **eternal life** (true communion with God). 4)

He shall **never leave you** nor forsake you. 5) You have **entered into the pleasures** of Christ Himself. 6) Though your outward man decays, **your inward man is renewed** day by day (2 Cor 4.16). Remind yourself of these and exhort yourself to whole-souled praise of your Redeemer!

### II. O MY BRETHREN, REMEMBER AND BLESS THE LORD (6-18)

Addressing God’s holy people, the psalmist reminds, exhorts (implied).

Their identification: “All that are oppressed” (6b), not all absolutely, but all in view here, further described. God’s elect are characteristically oppressed by the world (Jn 16.33; 2 Tim 3.12). “Moses [and] the children of Israel” (7), historically, now the spiritual ancestors of all Christians (1 Cor 10.1-4, “all our fathers,” ours as Christians whether Jew or Gentile; cf. Jas 1.1 with 2.1), and so, now us, too. “Them that fear” the LORD (11b, 13b, 17a)—today, true Christians in the churches (Acts 9.31; 2 Cor 7.1). “Such as keep His covenant and . . . remember His commandments to do them” (18) equates to evangelical faith and obedience, universal among the saved (Acts 16.31; John 14.21; 1 John 2.3, 4).

His benefits to us: Vindication/deliverance from oppressors (6). Special revelation of His ways and acts (7). Mercy, grace, patience of divine quality/proportion, allowing only brief, loving chastening for our sins, but no condemnation; rather, total forgiveness (8-12). Compassionate care for us analogous to a loving father’s of his precious children (13). Everlasting mercy to all the swiftly-passing generations of believers (14-18).

The praise that believers must offer: As David stirs himself by remembering benefits in 1-5, so he would stir the whole Church of God. Singing this psalm as intended, with reading, hearing, meditating, praying it, surely moves every true Christian in wonder and gratitude to bless the Lord!

### III. ALL CREATURES, REMEMBER AND BLESS THE LORD (19-22)

His unlimited sovereignty and control (19). A sweeping statement without qualification. The Church is God’s kingdom of **grace**, and all creation is His kingdom of **governance**. Absolute, comprehensive sovereignty as Creator and powerful Lord distinguishes Jehovah from the “gods” of the nations (Psa 115.2-8). They are impotent; He is omnipotent (Dan 4.34, 35).

A universal call to praise Him (20-22). Directed to obedient angels (20), (possibly) the countless stars (21), and all other creatures, animate and inanimate (22). This call includes all people. Silence is rebellious treason!

### CONCLUSION

Heartfelt worship and praise to God is our duty, our privilege, our benefit—especially for us Christians. Creatures owe their very being to God; Christians are made new in Christ only by His sovereign grace (2 Cor 5.17). We are not immune to the disease of spiritual forgetfulness with the symptom of our diminished usefulness in His praise, our highest calling. Remember His benefits to you, beloved, and lift up your hearts and voices to praise Him! The Holy Spirit calls you to this in and by Psa 103. God give us grace to trust and obey. Ω