

21.7.24 am

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 21 July 2024

Preachers: Angus McKellar, Duncan McKellar

[0 : 0 0] Well, let me welcome you to the service this morning, to our visitors. There's a few visitors here, so welcome, and we pray that your time with us will be a blessed time.

And welcome to those who have come back from holidays, from refreshment, and to our regulars. So let's start with some notices, so you've had a chance to look at them.

But after the service, there's tea and coffee, so let me encourage you to stay behind for tea and coffee and a chance to have fellowship together. We have a Sunday school holiday provision over the holidays for primary school kids.

So you're very welcome, after the second singing, to go through to the Sunday school room, where I think my wife Kirsty is in charge of that today, so who knows what might be happening.

Good morning. Evening service taken this morning by Farrakhar, one of our elders, and in fact he's preaching in Graver this morning, so we could be praying for him.

[1 : 0 3] Ladies' Fellowship on Monday at 8pm as usual. And Little Fishies on Tuesday at 10 o'clock. Road to Recovery on Tuesday at 7pm.

It always says, a short time of prayer with a cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit. There's more than one biscuit at Road to Recovery, so be encouraged to come if that's helpful.

David's still on holiday. We continue to pray for him, for a minister, that he would be having a refreshing time. He's been at Kiswick with his family over the last week. If there's a pastor who needs to speak to one of the elders first, and if a minister's required, then Dolan, Donald MacDonald, has very kindly agreed to be available.

And the prayer meeting on Wednesday, taken by Jim Sim, in person and also on Zoom, Wednesday 7.30. And next Sunday, David's back, so he'll be taking the service in the morning, and Donald John Morrison, Madrig, will be taking the 6pm service, and then there will be a praise night at 7.30.

So thank you to everyone who took part in the various clearing up on Friday and on Saturday, especially to those who were injured by maybe cement or brambles or bits of stuff falling on them.

[2 : 2 3] Thank you. There's now a new room through the back, cleared and available, which is great. So thank you, guys. That's left us with lots of containers, pots, pans, and various bits of stuff that's out in the vestibule there that we have found.

So please, on the way out, if it's yours, or if you know whose it is, please take it. And if you don't, you'll see it again in a charity shop in Stornoway. So you've got one opportunity today to take this stuff, and more stuff will be put out there next week.

I think that's all the intimations, unless I've forgotten anything, in which case please shout. Let's start this service now. Let me encourage us.

O thou my soul, bless God the Lord, and all that in me is. Be stirred up his holy name to magnify and bless. Let me say those words one more time.

Therefore, all of us this morning, why have we met together just now? O thou my soul, bless God the Lord, and all that in me is.

- [3 : 33] Be stirred up his holy name to magnify and bless. So let's stand and sing Psalm 103, verses 1 to 5.
- O thou my soul, bless God the Lord, and all that in me is.
- Be stirred up his holy name to magnify and bless.
- Bless, O my soul, the Lord thy God, and all forgetful be.
- Amongst gracious benefits he hath bestowed on thee.
- [4 : 48] All thy iniquities, who thou most graciously forgive.
- Who thy diseases, all unpaired, doth fear and thee relieve.
- Who doth redeem thy life that thou to death may not go down.
- Who thee with loving kindness doth and tender mercies crown.
- Who with abundance of good things doth satisfy thy mouth.
- [6 : 09] So that in last the eagles age reneweth thy youth.
- Let's pray. Holy God, we have come together today because we want to come together to praise your holy name.
- And even saying those words and singing these words, we are reminded of your holiness. Of your holiness, of your holiness, of your holiness, of your holiness, of your holiness.
- Of your greatness, of your strength. Of the fact that you are here with us. And you have loved us to the point that you've made it possible for us to praise you.
- Without being cast out, without being condemned. You've made it possible for us to come to you this morning in adoration.
- [7 : 26] We remember what you have done for us. We remember that though we are rebellious by nature.
- In love you have redeemed us. You have made it possible for us to come to you. Driven by love.
- In the vastness of the universe that you've created. In the infinite, wonderful, praiseworthy, astonishing universe that you've made.
- You love us. Even us. Even us meeting here this morning. And yet we know that we are rebellious.
- We know that we do bad things. We know that we sin. We know that we have sinned. We do sin. And we will sin. And in the despair that that brings.
- [8 : 37] We know that you have closed the gap. In a perfect way. Offering out salvation for all of us. You've also required us to accept it.
- You've made it necessary for us to realize the gap that exists. And to accept. Simply accept. Your forgiveness.
- Accept. Your love. Accept. Payment. Accept. The offer.
- To be new creatures. In you. Accept the invitation to be with you forever. And ever. Ever. And ever. Lord as we meet today.
- Give us a taste of what that's like. Give us. A taste. Of the glory.
- [9 : 40] Your glory. That we will experience for all eternity. As we come together. From different places. Different backgrounds. Speaking different languages.
- Different generations. Maybe even today. Three. Or maybe four generations. Together. Lord Jesus.

Give us the unity. That we can only know in Christ. That in our diversity. In our individual uniqueness. We know the wonder.

Of fellowship. In Christ. That we can praise you with one voice. We can praise. We can pray. We can meditate upon your word together.

We can experience the wonder of unity. In Christ. Lord Jesus. May. Our time this morning. Be a hallowed time. A time. When in some.

[10 : 40] Strange. Unfathomable way. Our worship. Is pleasing to you this morning. Our meditation upon your word. Is pleasing to you.

That somehow through. Us meeting here today. You will be blessed. Whatever that means. You will be blessed. And glorified.

And honoured. Lord Jesus. As we turn to you. From. Our sin. And from our need. We know that your heart.

Reaches out to us Lord. And you're glad. When we come to you. So let us come. To you Lord Jesus. Even now. Because we're weary. We're heavy laden.

We want to come to you Lord Jesus. And experience you. In all your magnificence. And all your love this morning. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Now Duncan's going to be.

[11 : 38] Preaching later on in the service. But just now he's going to. Do the kids talk. So kids. On you come. Come forward as usual. Duncan's going to come. With a bag.

Don't know what's in his bag. Must be something interesting. Anyone else coming forward? Up you come. Up you come.

Just come and. Come and sit here. He looks very ferocious Duncan. But he probably. He's probably safe. There we are. There we go. Oh here's someone else. You all ready?

There we go. Aye aye. Right. Welcome everyone. Welcome. I've got a simple task for us today. I want you to tell me. How long these things last.

Before they go off. So I'm going to show you some items. And you can tell me. How long they last. And then we're going to compare them together. So first up. Let's see what we have in the bag.

[12 : 40] A banana. A banana. Maybe from brownies. How long does this banana last? Not long. Not long. Give me a number. A few days. A few days. Okay. We've got a few days for the banana.

Now what we'll do. Is we'll make a scale. Things that don't last long can go down here. And things that last a very long time can go up there. We'll put the banana here for now. Next item.

Similar. A pear. A pear. A pear. How long does this last? More or less than the banana? Not long. Less. Not long. Okay.

We'll put the pear less than the banana. It's right there now. Now. Okay. Next up. I wonder if you can tell me what this is. What have I got in here?

Flowers. Flowers? No, it's not a pear. I'm not good at it. I don't know what flowers these are. Does it not long? Okay. But do they last longer or more than long?

[13 : 37] Way less. Way less. Well, and now I've taken them out the ground. I've taken them out the ground. They won't last long at all. So I'll put them down here. Very good. And what have I got here?

What do you need to have this? Grass. Just grass. Does it last a long time, grass? No? That took a lot longer. I'll put it down here. Longer. Longer.

Okay. We have some descent. We have some descent. I'll put it above the flowers. It'll keep us all happy. Next. Next item.

What are these? Sweet, sweet, sweet. Sweet. Ah. Go, go, go. Oh, go, go. Oh, go, go. Oh, go, go. Very good. I think if you've got the right answer, it won't last very long at all.

I'd be surprised if they last a minute. I'll keep them right down there. Very good. Next up. We're getting there. What's this?

[14 : 35] Big chunk of wood. It depends what you do with it. It depends what you do with it. But I think if we left it alone, it will last a long time. So I'll put it up there.

Right. Now, next up is a breath. But we can't see a breath. Come on. We can't see a breath. So what I'll do is I'm going to spray some of this. There's a breath.

Do you see it? I'll do it again. The breath. It's here and it's gone. How long does that last? How long does a breath last? One second. Not long at all.

Even less than the Mow Wows. Okay. Last item. What's this? A rock. A rock. How long does that last? A long time.

Any points for what type of rock this is? It's a pebble. It's a Harris rock. So it's Louisiana nice. It's bigger than a pebble, no? Well, you can get them in one. This rock is almost as long, as old, as the earth itself.

[15 : 36] It's very, very old. So we have very old rocks here. It lasts a long, long time. I'll put this right up here. Okay. Now here's a question for us.

Me. How long? You. Very good. I'm. Well, I've got a question for you. How long do you last? How long do we last? What do we think?

Not forever. Not forever. We don't know how long we'll last, do we? No. But even if we're lucky, what's the longest we'll last? A hundred times.

Yes. No. Less than the rock. A lot less than the rock. I think we'll be somewhere up here, but a lot less than the rock. We don't last very long at all. How long does God last?

Forever. God is infinite. Very good. We don't last very long, but God lasts forever. Now, the Bible says that in God's eyes, we are like grass that's here today and it's gone tomorrow.

[16 : 36] And God says that to him, our glory is like the flowers of the field. It flourishes now, but it's gone in an instant. Even more so, the Bible says we're like breath.

We're here now and then we're gone. In God's eyes, we don't last very long at all. Now, that's a problem. And here's a question. What has God done about that?

What's God done about that? We have a problem. We don't last very long at all. He sent his son. He sent his son. Very good. And his son died for us. Why does that solve the problem?

How does that solve the problem? Because we can go to heaven. We can go to heaven. But why has God sent Jesus? What's special about Jesus that helps us with this problem?

Because we only have to die for him. Yes. So he dies for us. So if we trust in him, we go to heaven. Anyone else? He died on the cross.

[17 : 37] He died on the cross. Excellent. See, these are all very good answers. But there's something else we need to remember. Jesus is fully God. And Jesus is fully man.

So Jesus, according to his divine nature, he lasts forever. He's eternal. But Jesus is fully human. And because he's both fully human and fully God, it means that if we trust in him, we too can live forever.

So that's our lesson today. Now, we're going to stay here and sing together before you head through to Sunday school. And we're going to sing, Bless the Lord, O my soul, which should come up on the screen.

Thank you very much for listening. Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul, Worship his holy name.

Sing like never before. O my soul, I'll worship your holy name.

[18 : 53] The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning. It's time to sing your song again.

Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me. Let me be singing when the evening comes.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul, Worship his holy name. Sing like never before.

O my soul, I'll worship your holy name. You're rich in love and you're slow to anger.

Your name is great and your heart is high. For all your goodness I will keep on singing.

[19 : 55] Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find. Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul, Worship his holy name.

Sing like never before. Oh, my soul, I'll worship your holy name. And on that day when my strength is failing, The end grows near and my time has come.

Still my soul will sing your praise unending. Ten thousand years and then forever more.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul, Worship his holy name. Sing like never before.

Oh, my soul, I'll worship your holy name. I'll worship your holy name.

[21 : 10] I'll worship your holy name. All right, so the children go out to summer Sunday school.

And we'll pray for them as they do so. What a privilege the kids have having Sunday school, eh? Enjoy, Lachlan and Hannes.

I'm just trying to work out how I'm going to replace all the fruits and garden flowers that have been stolen. But we'll find a way.

So let's turn and read Psalm 103. Duncan's going to be preaching from this later on.

So Psalm 103, I'm going to read from the ESV. Psalm 103. And I'll read the whole Psalm.

[22 : 21] Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me. Bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all his benefits, Who forgives all your iniquity, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from the pit, Who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, Who satisfies you with good, So that your youth is renewed like the eagles.

The Lord works righteousness and justice For all who are oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, His acts to the people of Israel.

The Lord is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, And abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, Nor will he keep his anger forever.

He does not deal with us according to our sins, Nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is his steadfast love Toward those who fear him.

As far as the east is from the west, So far does he remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, So the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.

[24 : 05] For he knows our frame, He remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass, He flourishes like a flower of the field, For the wind passes over it, And it is gone, And its place knows it no more.

But the steadfast love of the Lord Is from everlasting to everlasting On those who fear him. And his righteousness To children's children, To those who keep his covenant, And remember to do his commandments.

The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, And his kingdom rules over all. Bless the Lord, O you his angels, You mighty ones who do his word, Obeying the voice of his word.

Bless the Lord, all his hosts, His ministers who do his will. Bless the Lord, all his works, In all places of his dominion.

Bless the Lord, O my soul. Let's sing now two more verses from this psalm.

[25 : 25] We're going to sing in Gaelic. So for the Gaelic psalm, We remain seated. And we're going to sing Verses 8 to 10 of Psalm 103.

I will read the psalms in English, And then we'll hear it presented in Gaelic. The Lord is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, And abounding in steadfast love.

He will not always chide, Nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, Nor repay us according to our iniquities.

NINGNING CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SING CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

[28 : 48] CHOIR SINGS We pray for Farrakhar just now preaching in Graver. We thank you for him. We pray that you would give him liberty as he preaches there this morning and then here this evening.

We pray for him, for his family. We ask your blessing upon them. We thank you for his faithfulness to your word.

We pray for your minister who deliver your word, who pastor congregations. We pray for those in our own denomination, Lord Jesus, and your blessing, your abundant blessing upon them.

We can't think of a more difficult job being the minister of a congregation, Lord Jesus. We pray for these men that they know your blessing, your protection, that you use them, Lord Jesus, and their church leadership teams, their sessions, to be a blessing on their congregations.

And you use them to proclaim your word in their parishes. Lord Jesus, we pray for our nation. It is a dark nation. As a nation, we have, without any doubt, rebelled and chosen ludicrously false paths, putting our trust in anything but you.

[31 : 06] We pray for our nation, that they would seek truth and find truth. We pray for those who are planting gospel churches throughout our nation.

We pray for them, Lord Jesus, that your word would go forth, that communities would be transformed, that it would be easy for people to find truth when they seek it through your people.

We pray for those congregations who are older and maybe smaller, but who seek to go out into their communities with your word. Bless them with new people coming in. Bless them with your people.

You are a God of infinite resource, Lord Jesus. We ask that you bring the people of our nation back to worshipping you. And as we pray that, we pray for those in nations who don't have opportunity to meet in fellowship safely.

We pray for those in countries who meet together at great danger to themselves and their families. We pray, Lord Jesus, that even now, right now, you give them peace.

[32 : 32] You give them safety of spirit. You give them a desire to worship you and to proclaim your word, no matter the cost. Lord Jesus, we know that you promise that at some point, some defined, definite time, you will gather us all together.

And we will meet with you.

[illegible]

[35 : 01] Speak to us in an amazing way. Bless Duncan. Thank you for him. What a privilege it is as a father to have a son expounding the word to him.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Good morning.

It opens with an encouragement to bless the Lord. It says, Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me. Bless his holy name. But what does it mean to bless the Lord?

At each of the covenants in the Bible, God blesses his people. And his blessing is to the present and future benefit of his people.

It's as if we're praising God. We've been blessed by God and we're turning back his blessing to him in an act of thanksgiving. One commentator suggests it's like exalting or magnifying God.

[37 : 22] And so it is with blessing. We bless the Lord because we recognize he is the source of all our blessing.

And this psalm offers a few important reasons why we should bless the Lord. And we're going to look at those in turn. The first reason we should bless the Lord is because of what he has done.

And this is the first point. We bless the Lord because of what he has done. Look at verses 2 to 5 with me. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagles.

The emphasis here is on the abundant generosity of God. Just listen to what God does in these verses. God forgives, he heals, he redeems, he crowns, and he satisfies.

[38 : 56] This summary includes both God helping us with our problem and a further overflow of blessing afterwards. Look at the first two pictures we have here.

First, God forgives our iniquity. He heals our diseases. And he redeems our life from the pit. These all point to what God has done to remove the problem of sin.

Iniquity is another name for a kind of sin. The disease here talks about the spiritual impurity that's associated with sin.

Think of the meaning of leprosy in the Bible, which casts you out from the presence of God's community. The pit here signifies death.

Pit in the Bible is the problem of death that faces those who are under the problem of sin. And God deals with all these problems for us.

[40 : 00] And then we have the overflow. You see, after taking away the problem of sin for those who trust in him, God goes even further. It says that he crowns us with steadfast love and with mercy.

And he satisfies us with good so that our youth is renewed like the eagles. This goes beyond the removal of sin. It speaks of further blessing, of God's goodness welling up and out over his people.

So, the psalm leaves us in no two minds about just how comprehensive God's blessing is. He forgives all our iniquity and heals all our diseases.

So wide are God's blessings that the psalm has to use four different images to help us understand their magnitude. He heals our diseases.

There's rescue from a pit and redemption. there's crowning with steadfast love. And then there's renewal so that our youth is like the eagle.

[41 : 09] The paragraph, these opening verses use every technique that poetry has to offer to show how great is the goodness of God to those who trust in him.

and in meditating in these verses as Christians we should put ourselves into each of these images. Under sin we were trapped in the pit of death but by God's grace we can have renewed life so that we soar like the eagle.

Under sin we suffered from the disease of iniquity so we were cast out from the presence of God but by his grace we're healed we're brought in and we're crowned with steadfast love and mercy.

So what can we do and what should we do in response to this great blessing? Our task is simple in some ways it's straightforward and yet it's harder than we might imagine.

it's a task which we will all sometimes fail but the success of which is of utter importance. Our task is to forget not all his benefits but first an objection.

[42 : 29] You see this psalm overflows with a reflection of the goodness of God and some of us may feel that in our own positions in life it's inappropriate to do so and though this psalm is written for use by people who have trusted in God and experienced his goodness we often go through hardships in life and some of us will feel the weight of suffering and of sin.

Yet the conviction that this psalm isn't appropriate for us to pray or to sing is misplaced for two reasons. The first reason is that this is the 103rd psalm.

You see there are 102 psalms that come before this and many of those psalms are heartfelt laments which reflect the depth of suffering that God's people can face.

Think of the psalms in the preceding book where the psalms talk of the suffering of exile rejection by God loneliness disease illness and death.

This psalm isn't written in ignorance of what those psalms have to say. It's written with those psalms in the background and there's a second reason why this psalm can be sung even by those who feel the heaviness of life and that is because it is a psalm of David.

[43 : 56] Now we know that David for much of his life was subject to immense suffering. He was exiled from his people rejected constantly persecuted in danger of death faced the death of those whom he deeply loved and again rejected by those whom he loved.

Despite that David writes this psalm and exhorts us to bless the Lord together. You see so our question changes instead of asking whether it's appropriate for us to pray this psalm our question now is how can David despite the suffering he's endured and experienced in his life how can David who's aware of many of the psalms and laments that we have in this altar how can he respond to God in blessing how can he bless the name of the Lord with everything that is within him and in response to that question we come to our second point and that is to bless the Lord because of who he is that is bless the Lord because of who he is you see this psalm changes gear in verse 6 it goes a level deeper as the psalm moves from describing what God has done to moving to describing who he is it comes to the centre of God's character it comes to his very heart now to do this the psalm uses an event that occurred earlier in the

Bible in the book of Exodus which we can read about in chapter 34 God revealed himself in various ways across the Bible but this moment in Exodus is of particular importance many of us will be familiar with the events and the narrative of that book the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt to Pharaoh God rescued them from slavery to Pharaoh to service to him and he brought them to his holy mountain Sinai where he made a covenant with the Israelites a covenant with them so that they would be his people and he would be their God and so that they could love and obey him yet even as Moses was up the mountain of Sinai with the Lord the people rebelled they made a golden calf and they said that this golden calf was the God that had brought them out of Egypt immediately disobeying the most important of the commandments we'd expect

God to respond in wrath and anger we would expect God to wipe the Israelites out but he responds in patience he responds with mercy and it's at this very moment that the Lord reveals his character to Moses Moses asks to see the ways of the Lord which is referred to in error verse 7 he made known his ways to Moses Moses asks to see the very glory of God that is the essence of God and God reveals his glory that is his goodness to Moses as the Lord passes by while Moses is in a cleft in the rock he proclaims his name to Moses saying the Lord the Lord a God merciful and gracious slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness keeping steadfast love to thousands forgiving iniquity and transgressions and sin but who will by no means clear the guilty visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation this moment is critically important in understanding who

God is one author notes that short of the incarnation this is perhaps the high point of divine revelation in all of the Bible as in this text we climb to the very heart of who God is when we speak of God's glory we speak of what God is like and God here sets out what he's like for himself and it is found in his heart of mercy his glory is his goodness the Lord is merciful and gracious he's provoked to anger but he's not provoked to mercy mercy is his natural disposition his covenant love flows down to one thousand generations and his punishment only to the third or the fourth rather than primarily awarding this is to emphasize how incomparably great his mercy is it stretches out to thousands of generations of people

[49 : 05] Psalm 103 uses this revelation of God in verse 8 it begins largely the same the Lord is merciful and gracious slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and David aware of what Exodus says uses this Psalm to explain how God has revealed himself you see where Exodus states that the iniquity of the fathers that God will visit the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation the Psalm shows us exactly what that means it says he will not always chide nor will he keep his anger forever where Exodus the father and child imagery is used to show God's punishment here the father and child imagery is used to show the Lord's compassion as a father shows compassion to his children so the

Lord shows compassion to those who fear him it's as if David is pointing to Exodus and he's saying do you understand who God is be in no two minds God's heart is one of mercy and the centre of his character one of grace and overflowing goodness so as we see him in this passage it is a heart filled with immeasurable grace and this brings us to our challenge this morning where early in the psalm it says forget not all his benefits here it is crying out to us forget not who God is on commenting on this revelation of God Dane Ortlund notes that the Christian life from one angle is the long journey of letting our natural assumptions about who God is over many decades fall away being slowly replaced with God's own insistence on who he is this is hard work it takes a lot of sermons and a lot of suffering to believe that God's deepest heart is merciful and gracious slow to anger you see foremost among the effects of the fall was to entrench in mankind deep and dark thoughts about God a primary effect of sin is to doubt

God's goodness in recounting the narrative of the fall Sinclair Ferguson describes Satan's first temptation as an attempt to persuade Adam and Eve that God was possessed of a narrow and restrictive spirit bordering on the malign in fact God's first commandment to Adam and Eve was to enjoy his creation he says I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit you shall have them for food yet Satan lies did God actually say you shall not eat of any tree in the garden it's as if the serpent has whispered isn't it true that he's placed you in this garden full of delights and has now denied them all to you Satan lied about God's word and God's authority but more than anything else

Satan has lied about God's character Ferguson notes that the serpent's question carried a deeply sinister innuendo what kind of God would deny you pleasure and joy if he really loved you he allows you nothing and yet he demands that you obey him and this is the exact opposite of the truth God has given Adam and Eve everything in the garden to enjoy and he's asked only one small sacrifice of them only so that they would love and obey him all the more and Satan's tactics haven't changed his greatest victory may not be the sin which we so often commit but it may be the thoughts we have about God that drive us to that sin and that stop us seeking grace after we've committed it it's helpful in us identifying those reasons after all if God is perfectly good and his heart is one of mercy then all sin reflects either a short sightedness and a weakness of the will on the one hand or on the other hand our sin must reflect a lack of conviction that God is good with a strong will and belief in God's goodness there is no reason at all to sin so it's worth us considering the areas of our life in which we've forgotten that God is good for some of us this might be a prompt to examine our view of God's commandments do we see these as primarily restrictive so that the Christian life is just rather like the non-Christians but slightly worse the wrong view or do we see them as facilitative of our love and obedience to him

God protecting us from things that will harm us and helping us to grow in our love and our understanding of his son this process is one that we're never likely to complete we never will on this earth but it's one that prayerfully we should continue to practice as we continue on life's journey making sure we identify those areas where we may have lied listen to the lies of the devil that God is not good and does not want the best for us one practical tip might be to do as the psalmist does and list out God's benefits one by one thanking and praising him for them this can help us to engender an attitude of blessing towards God yet for Christians we have an advantage over the psalmist you see David had many reasons to praise

[55 : 39] God but we have even more and that leads us to our third point which is to bless God because of Jesus Christ the Lord that is to bless God because of Jesus Christ the Lord this psalm has revealed lots of God's character and his abundant goodness but it doesn't answer all the questions we might have about how God is able to bless us so abundantly since the start of the Bible mankind's biggest problem because of our sin is death this is what our psalm recounts in verse 14 for he knows our frame he remembers that we are dust as for man his days are like grass he flourishes like a flower of the field for the wind passes over it and it is gone and its place knows it no more this today is still our greatest problem with all the progress that the world has made we haven't solved this problem of death and nor will we and the answer to the problem of death in this psalm isn't as clear as it is for us today you see in psalm earlier in the psalms

God's eternal nature is listed as the cause of death because of sin God has to judge a rebellion against him and yet now the tension comes to be resolved but first one more tension that's resolved in Jesus Christ in Exodus it reminds us that God cannot let sin go unpunished and that remains true yes God is abundantly merciful but he has to punish sin and the psalm doesn't spell out how exactly God's anger is removed from his people and how it is that the iniquitous can be cleared but this tension too is removed by Christ though man like grass is temporary and the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting as the eternal son of God takes on flesh and is sent in the likeness of sinful flesh sin can be condemned in the flesh and the curse of death is removed from those who hope in

God! this is why Paul in Romans can proclaim!

might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit and this is why God can clear our sins so that as far as the east is from the west so far does he remove our transgressions from us it is in Jesus Christ we find the assurance that as high are the heavens above the earth so great is his steadfast love towards those who fear him there is no height that surpasses God's love for us and no breadth or distance that can out measure the forgiveness of our sins a distance that literally can't be traversed and so Paul exclaims that there's nothing not death nor life nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation but will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ

Jesus our Lord and as God our father condemns sin in the flesh of Christ Jesus so he reveals in greater clarity the immensity of his love for those in Christ as his heart of mercy and love are revealed and put on display for all of creation to see this is why when we want to see God and understand what he's really like we're asked to look at Christ Jesus it is in Christ that we have seen his glory we have seen what Moses asked to see but couldn't and in this psalm we are shown what God's deepest heart is like we are shown what the name of the Lord means but it is Jesus who inherits that name remember in Philippines Jesus Christ did not count equality with God something to be held onto for advantage rather he was willing to give up those divine rights be found in the likeness of man humbled himself to obedience to the point of death even death on a cross so that God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every other name so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father it is Jesus Christ who has given the name of the Lord that name which is above every other name as he displays the heart of God's character rich in mercy and overwhelming in steadfast love and it is fitting that it is after this great act of love that Jesus Christ inherits the name of the Lord it is as though

[61 : 45] God the Father points to the Son incarnate and says if you really want to know what I am like if you really want to see my heart of mercy then look at Christ Jesus if you wish to understand the image of the invisible God then our heavenly Father says look at the exact imprint of his being in Christ Jesus see in Christ God's mercy and goodness his commitment to his people embodied in the incarnate Son so great is his goodness that he did not hold on to equality with God for something to be held on to for advantage but took on human flesh for the sake of those who trust in him and it is this theme which runs right the way through the New Testament the Old Testament name Yahweh is Hebrew and the Greek slightly different but in our English translations normally Yahweh is conveyed by Lord so when it says

Jesus Christ is Lord most of the time that means Jesus Christ is Yahweh Jesus Christ has inherited and received the divine name which speaks of God's overflowing mercy and goodness so for Christians to see the heart of God's character and mercy we should look to Christ in a well-known quote Robert Murray McShane draws in this as he asks his reader to learn much from the Lord Jesus for every look at yourself take ten looks at Christ he is altogether lovely such infinite majesty and yet such meekness and grace and all for sinners even the chief live much in the smiles of God bask in his beams feel his all-seeing eyes settled on you in love and rest in his almighty arms good advice for all those found in Christ today the corruption of our flesh frustrates us our sin and the sin of others can make us disheartened and disillusioned but for the Christian we should never end with disenheartenment or disillusionment when we get discouraged by the blemish of sin we should look to the beauty of our saviour the world may contain suffering but no matter how great the suffering there is one who has suffered more and all to show us the immensity of his love for us the magnificent depth of his mercy and overpowering weight of his grace for those who are found in Christ the end of this psalm should make sense to us what other response would be fitting to so great a God it's a call for all of creation to bless the Lord the psalmist not content with one person's praise calls on all the angels the hosts of the Lord and the servants of the Lord to add their voice to this call of blessing in the end all of God's dominion are asked to bless the Lord there is no more appropriate end to this psalm and as we think on who God is we too should bless our heavenly father for the riches of his grace and mercy found in Christ

Jesus let us pray father we give you great praise and blessing for your wonderful heart of love and mercy we thank you for revealing this to us so clearly and we repent of being so forgetful of all that you've done for us and being so easily deceived as to who you really are father I pray that we would fix our eyes on Christ may we see in him the depth and riches of your mercy may we see in him and come to believe that your heart is one of grace and goodness and father help us to throw off the doubts that entangle us and the deceits of this world to run joyfully the race that is set before us so that we can run into the arms of our saviour on that final day and we pray this all in his mighty name amen now we're going to close in praise with and can it be what should come up on the screens is and can it be amen

I'm kind in me that I should gain I'm interested in the saviour's love I need for me who calls his name for me to him to death pursue amazing love how can it be that thou my God should die for me amazing love how can it be that thou my God should die for me for me tis missy all the immortal dies who come in smoke his great design they made the first

Lord seven cries to stand the death of love divine his mercy all that earth adore let the angels mind and why Lord his mercy all that earth adore let angels mind and why Lord he he left his father soul on so he saw infinite his grace emptied himself for all love and bled for a heart of selfless grace tis mercy all in thanks me for oh my

[68 : 54] God he found me his mercy all he went and me for oh my God he found out me Lord my bliss in thee fast found in sin and nature's night thy night diffused and quick day rain I hope the dungeon filled with light my chains fell off my heart lost me I rose and forth and followed thee my chains that on my heart was free I rose then forth and followed thee!

O con con depletion now I pray Jesus and all in him is mine alive in him my living head and clothed in righteousness divine O thy approach eternal throne and clean the cloud who cries my own O I of the eternal eternal throne and clean the ground who cries my own Lord Jesus thank you for revealing something of yourself to us today thank you for letting us sing together the words bold I approach the eternal throne

Lord Jesus may we carry this message your word sown in our hearts throughout the day throughout the coming week now together we say the benediction may grace mercy and peace from father son and holy spirit be with us all now and forever more amen