

Psalm 104

When you read the 103rd psalm and then progress naturally into the 104th psalm probably the 1st thing that jumps out at you is that they both begin exactly alike, “Bless the Lord, O my soul.” But as to where the psalmist calls upon his soul to bless and praise the Lord in the 103rd psalm on the basis of God’s compassion upon His people, in the 104th psalm he calls upon his soul to bless the Lord for the power He’s displayed in creation.

In this psalm we basically find the psalmist reiterating the creation account in poetic fashion. If you were to take Genesis Ch 1 and rather than have it stated “matter of factly” you had it given to you poetically it would read like the 104th psalm. Something else that we can deduct from this psalm (though it may be the obvious it’s worth stating) is that the writer had a working knowledge of the word of God. Not only does he reiterate what took place in the midst of the creation week, he reiterates it in the order in which creation took place, he doesn’t just say, “You created all the creatures of the sea, the sun and the moon, the animals and even the grass for them to eat.” It’s not simply a record of what took place but it’s also sensitive to the *order* in which it took place.

It’s so important that you and I be spending time in the word of God, gathering and gleaned a working knowledge of God’s word. How can you lead a life that’s pleasing *to* God or in line with what’s desired and even required of you *by* God if you don’t know what His word says? If you haven’t taken it and tucked it away in the memory of your mind and of your heart; remember these words, “*Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.*” Ps 119:11 There’s such overwhelming value in committing the instruction of God’s word to memory, hiding it away in your heart, believe me it will instruct you throughout your day. Here’s one more, “*The law of his God is in his heart; None of his steps shall slide.*” Psalms 37:31 Become a student of the word of God, take the time to really learn it, commit it to the memory of your heart, believe me it will serve, benefit and bless your life.

Vs1

You see there it is, “Bless the Lord, O my soul!” I think it bears repeating, we need to realize that praise isn’t something that at times wells up *in* us and spills out *of* us. Though it’s true that there are times of spontaneous worship whereby we’re simply overwhelmed with the goodness, the grace and the love of God and so we just can’t contain it we have to praise the Lord. But what we need to understand is that God is worthy of the utmost in adoration of our heart and the fruit of our lips (the singing of praise to His name) whether we’re in an emotional “I can’t contain it” kind of moment or we’re having a downer kind of a day and don’t really feel like lifting our voice or turning the attention of our heart toward the goodness of God.

Those elements are often times simply circumstantial; our praise of God should not be based upon circumstance (though often times truth be told it is). Our praise of God should be very purposed, it's a choice that we make whether we feel like it or not to acknowledge the fact that God is worthy of the very best that my heart has to offer and I will determine with in myself to praise the Lord. Here the psalmist calls upon his soul; he determines with in himself and a makes a choice to bless the Lord. You can choose to praise the Lord, or to not praise the Lord, it's up to you.

What else do we realize from that comment, "Bless the Lord, O my soul!"? We talked about it in the 103rd psalm...that true worship is not about the outward ritual but the inward reality of my heart.

It's, "Bless the Lord, O my *soul!*" You can come to church, go through all the motions, say all the right words and leave here having never really worshiped the Lord at all. You can draw near to God with your mouth, you can honor Him with your lips, you can drop a \$20 in the offering and the whole thing. But if your heart is far *from* Him, that is not really focused *on* Him or seeking to be pleasing *to* Him it's all for nothing. God doesn't want your sentiment, He wants your soul, He wants your inner man to be seeking *after* Him, sensitive *to* Him and in love *with* Him.

"O Lord *my* God, You are very great:" you see it's underscored there; it's about a personal relationship. He's not just some God way out there somewhere; He's not "the Man upstairs," or a force to be reckoned with that someone else has told him about. He's *his* God; He's *my* God, that speaks of relationship. You know when you speak of other people at times your refer to them as so and so's friend, "Oh, that guy is one of Mike's friends" or whatever. You don't claim them as *your* friend because you don't really *know* them, it wouldn't be appropriate, it would imply a relationship that doesn't exist. But when you take the time to get to know someone something happens, a relationship develops and you begin to take a personal position with reference to them, "He's *my* friend, she's *my* friend." How important it is to be cultivating (through prayer, through worship, through time spent in His word) a personal relationship with God.

He says, "You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty," he's going to begin here to elaborate on creation, emphasizing and magnifying the greatness of God. God is separate and distinct from His creation, yet He's chosen in many ways to reveal Himself *through* His creation. Creation in many ways acts not as a mirror in which we see ourselves but rather as a window through which we see our Creator.

God utilizes His creation in no less than a 2-fold manner; #1 *Evangelically* and #2 To bring man into Accountability. God uses creation evangelically, that is, to testify of His reality in an effort to reach out to man that man might seek Him out. It was Harry Emerson Fosdick who once said, “Could **blind chance** create symmetry and rhythm and light and color and melody? Or begin with the mathematics of the universe? The great mathematicians: Euclid, Newton, Einstein, did not create mathematical order; they uncovered the truth that was already there.” If you just put your thoughts in gear and get going into a forward motion it won’t take long to rule out random chance or empty probabilities. When you begin to think through the variety of creation, how many different varieties of species exist and how many variables of specie with in a specie? Then begin to consider the complexities with in each specie and how it is that they function the way that they do. What does it take to make the cardiovascular system tick? How does the nervous system work? What about the digestive tract or the reproductive system? On and on we could go regarding the complexities of creation and the variation of creation, having not even left planet earth yet.

What about the fact that we just happen to be in orbit where we are, do you realize that if the earth were only 2% closer to the sun than what we are, all water would evaporate and all life would die. If we were 2% farther away water would freeze and all life would die. That’s a pretty narrow margin. Think it through, the complexity and variety testifies that we’re not here randomly but by the hand of a sovereign Creator.

A simple structure like a house testifies to a builder, a designer, an engineer of some kind, you don’t have clothing apart from someone designing it, some intelligent though being placed into it. Those are simple things, yet so many want to throw that simple logic out the window when they consider something infinitely more complex such as the earth, all its inhabitants and the stellar galaxies beyond us. God uses His creation to reach out to mankind, to testify of His existence.

Beyond that creation makes man accountable, if after looking around and thinking through everything that’s around you, in the seas beneath you, in the atmosphere above and beyond you, you conclude there’s no God, it will testify against you. In the book of Romans Paul wrote this, “*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,*” Rom 1:18-21

So you see everyone on the planet has the same witness of creation testifying to them of the reality of a Creator, and what we do *with* that will make us accountable *for* that.

“You are very great,” Jeremiah said this, “*Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You. You show lovingkindness to thousands, and repay the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them — the Great, the Mighty God, whose name is the Lord of hosts. You are great in counsel and mighty in work, for your eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings.*” Jer 32:17-19 Jeremiah points out a 3-fold greatness of God. #1 He’s great in *creation*, “You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. #2 He’s great in *compassion*, “You show loving kindness to thousands. #3 He’s great in *counsel*, “You are great in counsel and mighty in work.” He is the Mighty God, the Wonderful Counselor, the Prince of Peace; Everlasting Father...clothed with honor and majesty.

Vs 2

Couple thing here, 1st of all we read that He “covers Himself with light” as with a garment. Of course it was on the 1st day when God said, “Let there be light, and there was light.” Now for the most part when we have God’s revelation of Himself to man throughout the scripture (apart from the cloud so as to veil Him) it’s accompanied by 1 of 2 things, light, or fire. When God revealed Himself to Moses it was at the burning bush, when the Angel of the Lord told Manoah about the birth of his son (Samson) you recall that He stepped into the fire and ascended in the flame. When Jesus was transfigured upon the Mt before Peter, James and John you remember His face shone as the sun, bright light emanated from Him. In John’s description of Jesus in the book of Revelation he says, “*He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.*” Rev 1:16

With regard to the new Jerusalem he writes, “*The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.*” Rev 21:23 Having said that when the bible speaks of somebody being “covered” in something as with a garment, or robed in something that’s generally descriptive of their character. “Robed in righteousness,” in Ps 73 Asaph says of the wicked, “*...pride serves as their necklace; Violence covers them like a garment.*” Ps 73:6 Here we’re reading that God covers Himself with light as with a garment. John said, “*This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.*” 1 John 1:5 In speaking of Christ, Paul declared to Timothy, “*...the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.*” 1 Tim 6:15-16

Vs5-6

It was day 3; God said, *“Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear”*; and it was so.” Gen 1:9 It’s interesting that God laid the foundations of the earth, yet He hangs the earth on nothing, *“He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing.”* Job 26:7 The book of Job is the oldest book in the bible yet well before science could verify that the earth wasn’t on the back of Atlas standing on a turtle or whatever the word of God declared that the earth was hung on nothing.

Vs7-9

Even the elements, the wind and the waves obey His voice. Of course it’s hard to read that with out thinking of the scene in the life of the disciples. There they were rowing hard, trying to keep the boat afloat; the Lord was sleeping in the stern there in the back of the boat. They wake Him up, *“Don’t you care that we’re perishing?”* It’s then that we read, *“Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace, be still!” And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. But He said to them, ‘Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?’ And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, ‘Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!’”* Mark 4:39-41 Over and over again Jesus displayed both in word and in works that He is none less than our Sovereign Creator, all things were made through Him and with out Him nothing was made that was made. *“You have set a boundary that they may not pass over,”* the seas receded and the land mass was brought into fruition.

Vs10-18

All this to say what we took time to say Sunday morning. God cares for His creation, God cares for you. He provided the necessary resources upon the earth to tend to your needs, and the needs of the animal kingdom, birds of the air, fish of the sea, the whole thing.

Now when he mentions wine back here don’t think in your 21st century mindset of grabbing some wine out of the rack or whatever. Wine back then was radically diluted with water and it’s main purpose was to purify the water by killing off bacteria and things of that nature. Drinking from a standpoint of getting tipsy or getting drunk is in no way supported anywhere in the scripture. As a matter of fact just the opposite is stated, if anyone stands in the clear to get drunk, proverbs 31 tells us it’s those who are perishing so that they might forget their misery. I don’t think the bible justifies even that, but that’s about as close as you can find. If you know the Lord, you need your senses about you, you don’t need to be numb, you’re the vessel of the Almighty God and as such you should be pure and holy, available to be used according to whatever plan He may have. Getting drunk is forbidden to the child of God...

Vs19-23

Order and balance even in nature, man works during the day (for the most part) and sleeps at night. Most of the animal kingdom (other than domestic) come out, or roam about at night and sleep during the day (not exclusively but generally). As for our order of creation, Day 4, *“Then God said, ‘Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth’; and it was so. Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also.”* Gen 1:14-16

Vs24

Think about it, God could’ve made a very boring, drab and simple world, a couple colors, 1 maybe 2 tastes, guys all looked the same, gals all looked the same. But He didn’t, His works are manifold, He mixed it up for us, displayed His wisdom in creation.

Vs25-29

God is the giver and taker of life, He’s in complete control of His creation. Now it’s been subjected to sin, He doesn’t violate the freewill of man yet He remains Sovereign throughout. Day 5, *“Then God said, ‘Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens.’ So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.”* Gen 1:20-21 Again how did this guy know that the sea was teeming with innumerable things? Did he survey the deep with undersea cameras? No, the word of God declared it so he believed it, we don’t have to know everything by personal experience. We can take God’s word for it.

Vs30

This is where we would consider man to come on the scene, the 6th day.

Vs31-35

Once again he comes full circle, considering the power of God in creation he issues forth praise to the Lord. Notice when the time is to praise the Lord (Vs 33) “...as long as I live” and again “while I have my being” which is to say that *now* is the time, while you have your being, to sing to and praise the Lord.

Finally you might underline Vs 34, “May my meditation be sweet to Him.” How often I feel as though I’ve failed the Lord on this point. I don’t even have to feel as though I’ve failed, I *know* I’ve failed. What do you set your heart, your mind on throughout the day, what are the things you cast your thoughts on? What is the meditation of your heart? “Can’t wait to retire,” “Wish I made more money” “Lookin forward to my next vacation...”

“May my meditation be sweet to Him” may the longing of our heart be for *more* of Him, to be used more *effectively* by Him, to have ears to hear Him and walk closely with Him. “Bless the Lord, O my soul! Praise the Lord!”

Prayer Points:

God we praise You for Your manifold works, and Your wisdom and how You’ve so clearly revealed Yourself in Your creation. We thank You that You care for us and that You’re in control. We thank You that You just need to speak the word and storms cease. I pray for anyone with in the sound of my voice who may have the waters rolling in their heart, in their life right now. God as they turn to You, and *cry out* to You, speak peace into their lives, lead them to still waters to the glory of Your name. We thank You and we praise You. Help us to cease the opportunity to praise Your name and cause us to meditate on things pleasing to You...