

Keynotes from Pastor Tim's am Sermon on 22/08/2021

Title: "The crown of God's love"

Series: Part Two of Three from Psalm 103

Text: Romans 8 verses 18-30

Scripture references from the ESV

Romans 8:18-30 ¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. ²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because ^[a] the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, ^[b] for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

There are two things that are hard to hear about ourselves but which are true for every human being. If we deal rightly with these things, they can be turned around for our eternal good. Both issues are raised in **Psalm 103** (see p4 for full text), and we can praise God that he has dealt with them both for us.

1. We are all what the Bible calls sinners. (Psalm 103:10,12)

David speaks of our iniquities and transgressions (our sins), and the words of the psalm tell us our sins have been forgiven. **The reason we need forgiveness from God**

is because we have all sinned against him. If we weren't sinners, we would not need to be forgiven.

We may feel that we're not that bad but we generally measure ourselves against our own standards of what it means to be good, or look at other people who don't live up to our own standards and compare ourselves to them. The Bible has a different standard against which we are to compare ourselves.

The Bible tells us that we need to compare ourselves to God and his law.

- God always tells the truth and keeps his word
- He always seeks the good of humanity and his creation
- He always relates to humanity with perfect purity
- He always acts with perfect justice
- He always honours his own name

God's law can be summarised by what we call the Ten Commandments. (**Exodus 20:1-17** see p4). We can see that we simply don't measure up when we are confronted with God and his law. We have all sinned.

We have fallen short of what God is and what he intended us to be.

2. Our lives are short and death comes to us all (Psalm 103:15-16 see p4)

Just like the grass that lasts a few days, we are born, grow old and are cut down in death. Despite thinking we are important, in a short time we lie in our graves forgotten. **In 100 years' time no one will remember us.**

There is something profoundly unsettling about this. During the last 18 months, we have seen how the world has sought to fight off death, doing everything possible to keep people alive. Although we know that it will happen,

it doesn't seem right that death comes to us at all.

That is because God created us with eternity in our hearts, with a soul that never dies and with bodies that were meant to live forever. What has gone wrong? Death is the inevitable result of the sin of humanity.

Sin and death are linked.

- God warned Adam (**Genesis 2:16-17** see p4) that if he sinned against God he would die, and death is the inevitable consequence of the whole of humanity turning its back on the God who gives life.
- This has brought not just physical death, but also spiritual death. Hence, we are born cut off from the life of God so that we can't be as good as God is or stop ourselves sinning and dying, and eventually being eternally cut off from God.

Living in a culture that has sanitised sin and death, we may never have been confronted by this before. Perhaps our reaction is that we don't like the idea and don't want to believe it or even think about it. That won't make the problem go away however.

The only hope we have of seeing sin and death removed from us is found in God, and his steadfast (covenant) love for us.

Psalm 103 shows us this. We saw last week that God's nature is love and that steadfast love overflows to humanity. It is a covenant love where God promises to take a people to be his people and he will be their God forever.

David shows that God, driven by his steadfast love for his people, reverses the effects of our fall into sin and death. At the start of the psalm, King David lists five benefits that God gives to his people, celebrating the fact that these benefits deal with the problem of our sin and lift us from the grave.

1) Forgiveness: Bless the Lord O my soul and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity (vv2-3).

Death is the consequence of humanity choosing to sin against God. Logically, God must deal with sin (the root cause of our problem), before he can relieve its consequence - death. We see that God forgives his people all sin (**v3**). No sin is outside the scope of his forgiveness except one. (More next week).

You might feel that what you have done is unforgivable, but David had committed adultery and murder. He had lied, coveted and stolen another man's wife and dishonoured her family, driven by the idol of lust and sex. He had broken many of

the Ten Commandments, yet God forgave him when he confessed and repented of his sin.

(2 Samuel 11 and 12 – Please read this in your Bible).

Did David's sin not matter to God? It mattered greatly to God, but he made a way for David, and for everyone who owns up to their sin, to be forgiven. He did this by charging our sin to Jesus who willingly died in our place to pay the price for our sin.

If you are willing to repent and trust in Jesus, God will forgive you all your sin.

2) Healing: Bless the Lord O my soul and forget not all his benefits,... who heals all your diseases (vv2-3)

Sin has brought sickness to both our bodies and our souls, and he will bring healing to both. We may have to wait for it though! The healing of our souls comes because **God doesn't just forgive us, he also changes us.**

When we come to God, confessing our sin and trusting in Jesus, God pardons us and then begins to work in us to restore his image so that we begin to live right. This sanctification is part of what Jesus died to secure for us (**1 Peter 2:24-25** see p4). The Holy Spirit now lives in us to teach us God's commands and to lead us in obedience to those commands. When we find ourselves becoming more inclined to obey God, and particularly his command to love and worship him, we know we are truly saved and that **God is at work in the healing of our soul.**

3) Redemption: Bless the Lord O my soul and forget not all his benefits, ...who redeems your life from the pit (vv2-4)

The grave (pit) and the eternal judgement of God is what awaits everyone, but if we are trusting in Jesus **God has redeemed our lives from the grave.** He has purchased our lives and secured eternal life for both soul and body.

The Bible tells us that when Jesus returns to earth, he will raise our bodies to life. Those who have rejected Jesus will be raised to eternal death, but those who come to Jesus for forgiveness and sanctification will be raised to eternal life. On that day our bodies will be fully healed from all that is wrong with them now.

Redemption requires a payment to be made, and that payment was the death of God's own Son.

- Jesus came down into the grave to rescue us out of it. He went into both physical and spiritual death and made a way out for everyone who would trust themselves to him.

Every physical healing that happens now, whether miraculous or through medication, is a reminder of God's power to defeat sin and death

4) Crowning: Bless the Lord O my soul and forget not all his benefits, who .. crowns you with steadfast love and mercy (vv2-4)

God lifts his people from the pit of sin and death to sit with Christ in heavenly places. Jesus left heaven and came to this earth, born as a man with a real human body. He was put to death and his death became the means by which he would secure our salvation. Three days later he was raised to life, and then after 40 days he ascended back to heaven to sit on the throne of God as **King to rule over God's kingdom**. As his followers, where he goes, we go too. (**Ephesians 2:4-6** see p4). In **Romans 8:29-30** (above) Paul tells us that we are being sanctified, that we have been put right with God (justified) and (note the past tense) we have been glorified. It hasn't happened yet but as far as God is concerned it has already happened.

We are crowned with the honour of being God's children – all to the praise of God's glorious grace

5) Renewing: Bless the Lord O my soul and forget not all his benefits, who..... satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's (vv2-5)

Not only will God raise us to life with bodies and minds that are fully healed of every sickness, but he will satisfy us with himself forever so that we will regain our youthful vigour. In this life, age has caught up with us all, but those whom God has set his love upon will never grow old or weary.

Through the long ages of eternity, God will continually renew our youthfulness. Psalm 103 celebrates what is promised in Romans 8 (above), leading Paul to make the statement in v18. All our battles will be over as Jesus returns to establish a renewed heavens and a renewed earth. Those who are trusting in Jesus will be raised to enjoy God forever.

If you are not trusting in Jesus, then none of the benefits in this psalm apply. Seek the Lord for salvation now.

In the meantime, God's people are to **wait** eagerly (v23 above) and patiently (v25):

- Setting aside the things that bind us to this life, eagerly look forward to the hope of eternity with Jesus
- As we eagerly look forward to that hope we need to wait patiently

While we wait, God's people are to **praise God**, as we contemplate all that God promises and how he has dealt with the twin problems of sin and death. Let us say with the psalmist:

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Psalm 103 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

² Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,

³ who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,

⁴ who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,

⁵ who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

⁶ The LORD works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed.

⁷ He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel.

⁸ The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

⁹ He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever.

¹⁰ He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.

¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;

¹² as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

¹³ As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.

¹⁴ For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.

¹⁵ As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field;

¹⁶ for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more.

¹⁷ But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him,

and his righteousness to children's children,

¹⁸ to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments.

¹⁹ The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.

²⁰ Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word!

²¹ Bless the LORD, all his hosts, his ministers, who do his will!

²² Bless the LORD, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul!

Exodus 20:1-17 And God spoke all these words, saying,

² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.³ "You shall have no other gods before^[a] me.⁴ "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.⁵ You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me,⁶ but showing steadfast love to thousands^[b] of those who love me and keep my commandments.⁷ "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.⁸ "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.⁹ Six days you shall labour, and do all your work,¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.¹¹ For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

¹² "Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

¹³ "You shall not murder.¹⁴ "You shall not commit adultery.¹⁵ "You shall not steal.¹⁶ "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.¹⁷ "You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbour's."

Genesis 2:16-17 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden,¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat^[d] of it you shall surely die."

1 Peter 2:24-25 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.²⁵ For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Ephesians 2:4-6 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together

with Christ—by grace you have been saved—⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,