

# THE MERCY OF GOD

Psalm 103:1-22.

## LESSON 135 -- Primary Course

MEMORY VERSE: “Shew forth the praises of him who hath called you”  
(I Peter 2:9).

### BIBLE TEXT

#### Psalm 103:1-22.

1 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 forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

6 ¶ The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.

7 He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.

8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.

10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

15 As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.

16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.

17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;

18 To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.

19 ¶ The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

20 Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.

21 Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.

22 Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul

### God's Mercy

Shall we imagine we are on an open hillside early one summer morning? The birds are singing their sweet songs. The grass is wet with dew, and as we walk along, little clumps of white daisies appear here and there at our feet. Suddenly the sun starts peeping up over the edge of the world, and as it rises swiftly, its warm, rich rays of light stream in all directions. This is like the mercy of God, about which David wrote in our lesson today.

We are on a hill — close to God. But some people are in valleys and in thick forests where only a little of the sun reaches them. So it is with the mercy of God. All people — even those who do not love God — receive some of God's mercy. God sends the sunshine and the rain on all the earth to water the farms and gardens so that everyone has something to eat. The pods on the cotton plants burst with white fluffs of cotton, and the sheep grow thick coats of wool, so everyone, whether good or bad, has something to wear. But only those who live

close to God — that is, those who are saved — receive the best of His mercy, because the best of God’s mercy makes us ready for Heaven.

### **Repentance**

God’s mercy is kindness shown to those who really should be punished because they have been naughty and bad. God does not let people “get by” with being bad, but when they repent, or change their mind about doing wrong things, He forgives them.

Jesus told the story about a man who needed help in his vineyard. Perhaps the grapes were ripe and ready to be picked, or the vines may have needed to be cut. He said to one of his boys, “Son, go work to day in my vineyard.” This boy did not love and honour his father as God tells all little boys and girls to do, and he said, “I will not.” But Jesus said that later on this boy repented and went out into the vineyard to work as his father told him to do.

Just so every boy and girl, man and woman, must stop doing what they know they should not do. Then when they pray and ask God to forgive them, He shows mercy, or kindness, to them and takes their sins far, far away, “as far as the east is from the west.”

### **David the Shepherd**

David could write about God’s mercy because God had been merciful to him; not only in saving him so that he could go to Heaven, but in many other ways. Would you like to hear again the story of David, the sweet songwriter of Israel?

As a young boy, David lived long, long ago in the Holy Land, in the little town of Bethlehem. His father Jesse had many sons and David was the youngest. David took care of his father’s sheep. He was called a shepherd.

### **God’s Way**

We know that Jesse and his family were Jews, or Israelites. No doubt David’s father and mother often told him and his brothers how God had delivered their people from the Egyptians who were mean to the Israelites and had made them work very hard. God had given them Ten Command-ments and certain rules, which they were to obey. God told the fathers and mothers to teach their children these laws and rules. They were to talk about them when they sat together in their homes, and when they walked down the street together. They were to speak of them just before they went to bed at night, and the first thing when they got up in the morning.

No doubt Jesse had often repeated the Ten Commandments to his sons, and told them the beautiful way God wanted them to live. They were to love and obey their father and mother. They were not to steal. They were not to tell lies. When they cut and gathered in the wheat and barley from their fields, they were to leave the grain that happened to fall to the ground so that the poor and the strangers could come and pick it up without having to pay for it. They were not to say unkind things about people. They were to be kind to the deaf and the blind people, and they were to rise up when an old gentleman or an aged lady came into the room (Leviticus 19:14, 32). The Bible tells us that when Solomon’s mother came to visit him when he was a great king, he “rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, . . . and cause a seat to be set” and she sat beside him.

### **God’s Mercy to David**

Sometimes David led his sheep to pasture many miles from Bethlehem, and he may have spent many nights alone with them. He learned to love God and expect God to help him. One time a lion came and took a lamb from David’s flock, and David went after the lion and took the lamb out of his mouth and killed the lion. Another time a bear came, and David killed the bear, too. David knew that God had saved him from being hurt by the lion and the bear.

### **David Plays and Sings**

Perhaps it was out on the hillsides near Bethlehem, as David was watching his father’s sheep that he learned to play the harp. He did not waste his time. He wrote songs about his own life and about the things that happened to the Israelites and the many good things God did for them. He played his harp as he sang these songs. His songs, or Psalms, were filled with praises and thanksgiving to God for all his goodness.

When David was just a young man, King Saul wanted someone to play for him. No doubt David had been careful to keep up his practicing; and because he could play very well, he was asked to play for King Saul. Later David was king himself. Sometimes Jesus wants someone to play for Him in church, or perhaps to play for someone who is sick and not able to be in church. He might want you, but of course if you have not practised faithfully so you can play well, someone else will have to do it.

The Psalm we have read today is David's testimony. As many people today praise God in church for what He has done for them, so David is praising God for saving him, for making him well when he was sick, and giving him food to make him strong. David tells that God takes the part of those who are mistreated. If someone makes fun of you because you are a Christian, God will help you. God talks to His children and comforts them and tells them in the Bible what He wants them to do. David says God is like a father to those who fear Him, or love and obey Him, and shows great mercy, or kindness, to them.

### **The Fear of God**

We have read of little Samuel, who lived with Eli the priest. He heard someone call his name in the middle of the night, and thought Eli was calling him. It would have been much easier to have stayed in his cozy bed, but he got right out of bed and ran to Eli, and said, "Here am I." This shows he loved and honoured and feared Eli and quickly obeyed him always. It is like that when we fear God – we obey Him and do what we know He wants us to do. When Satan comes to tempt us, wanting us to do something we know we should not do, we do not pay any attention to him, because we love and fear God, and we would not displease our Lord for anything.

## **QUESTIONS**

1. Name three ways in which God shows His mercy to us. Psalm 103:3, 5.
2. To whom does God show His greatest mercy? Psalm 103:11, 13, 17.
3. What does it mean to fear God? Psalm 103:17, 18.
4. What does God do for those who repent? Psalm 103:12.
5. What are we to do in return for His great mercy to us? Psalm 103:22.

## LESSON RESOURCES

### TOPIC

# THE MERCY OF GOD

Lesson 135

Psalm 103:1-22

MUSIC

# A Child's Thanksgiving

WATCH & PRAY 37

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**SONG**

## **A Child's Thanksgiving**

**We sing the praise of God above**

**For all His goodness and His love**

**He sends all good things unto us**

**He feeds and clothes and houses us**

**PICTURE 1**



**PICTURE 2**

