

Summer in the Psalms

The God Who Remembers Us

Introduction: There are many people who believe in God, but are not always certain what God is like.

Some picture God as distant and uninvolved, watching the world from heaven but rarely entering into the struggles of ordinary people.

Others imagine God as constantly angry, looking for every mistake and waiting to punish those who fail.

Still others think of God as unpredictable: loving one moment, disappointed the next, generous today but reluctant tomorrow.

Psalm 103 gives us a very different picture.

David does not merely tell us that God exists. He tells us what God is like.

He is righteous. He is compassionate. He is gracious. He is patient. He is forgiving.

He understands our weakness. He remembers our frailty.

And His love reaches beyond the boundaries of this brief earthly life.

In the opening verses, David remembers what God has done for him personally. God forgives, heals, redeems, crowns, satisfies, and renews. *“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.”*

Here in verse 6, David widens the lens.

He moves from what God has done for one individual to what God has revealed about His character to all His people.

David takes us back to Moses. He reminds us of Israel’s history. **He points us toward the immeasurable mercy of God.**

This passage assures us that when we come to God, we’re not coming to One who is unwilling to receive us.

We’re coming to the God who remembers us, understands us, forgives us, and surrounds us with everlasting love.

HE LOVES TO HELP THE NEEDY Psalm 103:6

“The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.”

Throughout Scripture, God reveals Himself as the defender of those who cannot defend themselves.

The word “**oppressed**” describes people who have been wronged, mistreated, crushed, exploited, or pushed down by forces stronger than themselves.

In the Old Testament the word especially referred to widows, orphans, foreigners, and the poor.

It tells us the Lord is not **unconcerned** when the weak are mistreated or unmoved by injustice.

He is not deaf to the cries of those who have no power, no influence, and no one to defend them.

David declares that God sees them.

The God of Psalm 103 is not a God who remains safely distant from suffering. **He enters into it.**

This is most clearly seen in Jesus Christ.

He touched lepers whom others avoided.

He welcomed children whom others considered completely unimportant.

He spoke with those whom society had cast aside.

He defended the woman condemned by the crowd.

He stopped for blind Bartimaeus while others tried to silence him.

He saw people whom everyone else overlooked.

The ministry of Jesus was a living demonstration of the words from our text:

“The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.”

But folks, what a challenge this is for us as a church.

If our God cares for the needy, His people must care for the needy.

If He notices the forgotten, we too should notice the forgotten.

If He hears the cries of the hurting, God forgive us if we close our ears.

There are those who feel alone. There are those who smile publicly but weep privately.

Take heart! God sees them all.

And very often, He chooses to express His care through His people.

The Lord loves to help the needy, and He calls His church to reflect that same heart.

HE SHOWS MERCY TO THOSE WHO DO NOT DESERVE IT Psalm 103:8

“The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love”

See the four magnificent attributes of God in this verse:

- 1) The Lord is compassionate-**He pardons us.**
- 2) The Lord is gracious-**He gives us what we don't deserve.**
- 3) The Lord is slow to anger-**He is patient with us when we fall.**
- 4) The Lord abounds in love-**He loves us abundantly more than we can imagine.**

When he saves, he saves completely.

When he forgives, he forgives all our sins.

When he sets free, we are free forever.

Grace is God giving us what we don't deserve.

Mercy is God withholding the judgment we do deserve.

At the cross of Calvary, justice and mercy met says Romans 5:8

"God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Not when we had improved ourselves. Not when we had made ourselves respectable.

Not when we had finally become worthy. *"While we were still sinners."*

HE TEMPERS HIS ANGER Psalm 103:9

"He will not always accuse, nor will he harbour his anger forever."

David says that God is "slow to anger."

HE IS PATIENT. He warns. He calls. He waits. He gives people opportunity to repent.

The apostle Peter writes: **2 Peter 3:9**

"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise... Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

God's patience must never be mistaken for indifference.

HE FORGIVES ALL OUR SINS Psalm 103:10

"He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities."

This may be one of the most astonishing statements in the entire Psalm.

If God treated us exactly as our sins deserved, none of us could stand before Him.

When God forgives, he removes our sins, he takes them away, and he puts them so far away from us that we could never find them if we searched for them for a thousand years.

They are gone forever. Even Satan can't bring them back.

David uses three powerful pictures to describe the greatness of God's forgiveness.

HIS LOVE IS HIGHER THAN THE HEAVENS PSALM 103:11

"For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him."

David looks upward. How high are the heavens above the earth?

Beyond measurement. Beyond our ability to reach. Beyond our ability to comprehend.

That is how great God's covenant love is toward His people.

It exceeds our measurements.

We imagine that our failures have exhausted His patience.

But His love is higher.

We fear that we have fallen beyond the reach of grace.

But His love is higher.

We wonder whether God can still receive us.

But His love is higher.

OUR SINS ARE REMOVED BEYOND RECOVERY Psalm 103:12

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

David's point is clear: when God forgives our sin, He removes it completely.

He does not merely hide it temporarily.

He does not store it away for future use.

He does not forgive today and bring it back tomorrow.

He removes it. The record is cancelled. The debt is paid.

Corrie ten Boom once pictured God casting our sins into the depths of the sea and placing a sign there saying, **"No fishing."**

Yet many believers continue fishing.

We confess a sin to God, receive His forgiveness, and then return to retrieve what He has removed.

When God says forgiven, let's learn to agree with God.

HE UNDERSTANDS OUR WEAKNESS Psalm 103:13

"As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him."

David now gives us a tender family picture. God is like a compassionate father.

A loving father does not expect a small child to possess the strength, experience, or understanding of an adult. **He knows the child's limitations.**

When a child stumbles while learning to walk, a loving father does not say, "You've such a disappointment me. Never try again."

He reaches down. He lifts the child. He steadies the child. He encourages the child to take another step.

What a picture this is of our loving Heavenly Father.

He knows that our faith is sometimes weak. He knows that we become tired.

He knows that we're easily discouraged.

He knows that we sometimes struggle to understand His ways.

He knows the battles taking place within us.

Jesus demonstrated this compassion throughout His ministry.

When the disciples fell asleep in Gethsemane, Jesus said:

"The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Matthew 26:41

He understood their weakness.

When Peter denied Him, Jesus did not discard Peter.

He restored him.

When Thomas doubted, Jesus did not abandon him.

He invited Thomas to examine the evidence.

When the disciples were confused, Jesus continued teaching them.

When they were afraid, He said, "Take courage."

When they were grieving, **He came near.**

Earthly fathers, however imperfect, point us upward to our Heavenly Father. When an earthly father has done his job well, he makes it easy for his children to believe in their Heavenly Father.

HE REMEMBERS THAT WE ARE DUST. Psalm 103:14

“For he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust”

This verse takes us back to creation. Genesis 2:7

“The Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.”

We are wonderfully made, but we are still dust.

Our strength is limited. Our knowledge is limited. Our time is limited. Our bodies are fragile.

David continues: Psalm 103:15–16

“The life of mortals is like grass, they flourish like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.”

HERE IS A TRUTH WE ALL UNDERSTAND, especially in the fall season of the year. Yesterday's green leaves soon turn brown. It's an inescapable law of nature that the green leaves of spring end up in a pile on our lawns.

Who remembers each leaf? Not the tree. One by one the leaves fall to the ground where they disintegrate and return to the soil from which they came. No one names them or numbers them or even thinks about them.

It's the way of nature, the way God arranged the changing of the seasons.

A flower may bloom beautifully for a season, but its beauty does not last forever.

So it is with human life. We flourish for a time.

We work. We build. We plan. We raise families. We form friendships. We serve. We dream.

But life passes quickly. The years move much faster than we expect.

The strength we once took for granted begins to fade.

The body becomes tired. Loved ones are taken from us.

Eventually, our own earthly life comes to an end.

Remembering that we are dust should produce a deep humility within us.

To recognize every breath and every heartbeat is a gift from God. Every day is a mercy.

He remembers that we are dust.

The encouraging truth is that God never forgets what we sometimes forget.

He knows when we need rest. He knows when the burden is heavy.

He knows when our hearts are breaking. He knows when our strength is almost gone.

And the God who remembers our weakness does not abandon us in it.

HE LINKS US WITH ETERNITY BY LINKING US WITH HIMSELF Psalm 103:17

“But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord’s love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children’s children.”

Verse 17 begins with one of the great words of Scripture:

“But.”

We are like grass. **But the love of the Lord is everlasting.**

We are temporary. **But God is eternal.**

Our strength fades. **But His faithfulness remains.**

Our earthly lives come to an end. **But His love stretches from everlasting to everlasting.**

David is placing our frailty beside God’s eternity.

On our own, we are dust. On our own, our lives are brief. On our own, we cannot defeat death.

But God links us to eternity by linking us to Himself.

The resurrection of Jesus becomes the guarantee of our resurrection.

His home becomes our eternal home. Because He lives, we also shall live.

The years may pass. The body may weaken. The earthly journey may end.

But nothing can separate those who belong to Christ from the everlasting love of God.

Not trouble. Not sickness. Not grief. Not age. Not death. Romans 8:38–39

“Neither death nor life... nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

David also says that God’s righteousness extends to *“our children’s children.”*

This does not mean that faith is inherited automatically. Every generation must personally respond to God’s offer of salvation.

It Reminds Us That God’s Faithfulness Outlasts Every Generation

We may not live to see all the fruit of our prayers.

We may not see every seed we plant come to maturity.

We may not know how our faithfulness will influence children, grandchildren, and those who follow after us.

But God's covenant love continues.

The greatest legacy we can leave is not money, property, achievements, or possessions.

The greatest legacy is a life that points others toward Jesus Christ.

Surely we all pray that those who follow us will be able to say about us:

"They trusted God." "They loved Jesus." "They prayed for us." "They lived what they believed."

"They showed us that the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting."

CONCLUSION: REMEMBER WHAT GOD REMEMBERS

Psalm 103 tells us that God remembers.

He remembers His covenant. He remembers His mercy.

He remembers that we are dust. And He remembers His people with everlasting love.

Our problem is often that we remember the wrong things.

We remember our failures but forget His forgiveness.

We remember our weakness but forget His strength.

We remember our grief but forget His comfort.

We remember our sins but forget the cross.

We remember that we are dust but forget that we belong to the eternal God.

David begins this Psalm by saying: "Forget not all his benefits."

Do not forget the God who sees the oppressed.

Do not forget the God who shows mercy to the undeserving.

Do not forget the God who is slow to anger.

Do not forget the God who removes our sins as far as the east is from the west.

Do not forget the Father who understands our weakness.

Do not forget the Creator who remembers that we are dust.

And do not forget the Saviour who joins us to Himself and gives us everlasting life.

Perhaps you feel weak today.

God remembers.

Perhaps you feel burdened by the past.

God forgives.

Perhaps you feel that life is passing quickly.

God's love is everlasting.

Perhaps you are conscious of your own mortality.

Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life.

Our earthly lives are like grass.

But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.

Our bodies return to dust.

But those who belong to Christ are linked to eternity.

Our strength may fail.

But His grace will not.

Our memories may fade. **But God will never forget His own.**

Closing Appeal: Have you personally received this mercy?

Jesus invites us to come. Come with your weakness. Come with your regrets.

Come with your fears. Come as dust to the One who gives eternal life.

Place your trust in Jesus Christ, who died for your sins and rose again.

And when you are joined to Him by faith, His promise becomes your hope:

"Because I live, you also will live." John 14:19

The grass withers. The flower falls. But the love of the Lord endures forever.