

Small Group Discussion Guide
Sermon Date: October 9, 2022
Speaker: Reverend Raphael Warnock
Scripture Text: Psalm 103:1-22
Sermon Title: BLESSING THE GOD WHO BLESSES US

103 Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. ²Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: ³Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; ⁴Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; ⁵Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. ⁶The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. ⁷He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. ⁸The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. ⁹He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger forever. ¹⁰He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. ¹¹For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. ¹²As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. ¹³Like as a father pities his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. ¹⁴For he knoweth our frame; he remembered that we are dust. ¹⁵As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourished. ¹⁶For the wind passed over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. ¹⁷But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; ¹⁸To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them. ¹⁹The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom rules over all. ²⁰Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. ²¹Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. ²²Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.

Sermon Summary

Our scripture focuses on the devotional nature of Psalm 103 as a means of understanding how the Psalms in general can be used as prayers and help us to facilitate spiritual disciplines. The use of the term "bless" in our text indicates a relationship with God rather than a transaction in which we are merely recipients of material things.

Unfortunately, the world and the church have become obsessed with thinking of blessings in a consumer and/or material sense, causing many people to forgo a spiritual relationship with God. The sermon urges us to hold to the principles that recognize, walking, talking and having a relationship with God is a blessing. As we embrace these "principles of blessings", we'll be more likely to use our blessings to bless others and more importantly do as the Psalmist exhorts, to "bless the Lord" with all our souls.

Sermon Points

- I. **Bless the Lord for what God has done for me Individually (vv3-5)** – When we engaged in a deep and reflective mode we'll see [v.2] that we are beneficiaries of a comprehensive blessing plan, and we must "understand our blessing policy"
 - a. He forgives our iniquities and heals our diseases
 - b. Like Reverend Wormack who God took from public housing in Savannah to the U.S. Senate, the God who has bless you individually is worthy to be praised

- II. **Bless the Lord for what God has done for Us Collectively (v.6)** Our collective blessings reassure us that we are never alone
 - a. He made known His Ways to Moses and His Acts to the People of Israel because the God who blesses us individually wants us to see how we're blessed collectively
 - b. God has blessed us collectively throughout the struggles and triumphs as seen in the African American history

- III. **Bless the Lord for what God has done for all Creation Universally (vv18-22). The God, who is our Liberator, is also Creation's Consummator**
 - a. Therefore, all believers can bless God by honoring and blessing God's creation
 - b. The Psalm concludes with God's expectation that all the Creation will "bless the Lord".

Discussion Questions

- 1] How have you resisted associating individual accomplishments and material possessions with the Blessings of the Lord? Can we make this distinction?
- 2] Talk about a time when having material possession interfered with your faith. How did you overcome?
- 3] What does it mean to be in a relationship with God?
- 4] Describe what collective blessings look like in a society plagued with inequalities and injustices.
- 5] In what community have you received a collective blessing?
- 6] What does it mean for you to honor and bless the creation?