

11/23/25

Sermon Title: Praise the LORD

Preacher: Pastor Kim Soonbae

Scripture Passage: Psalm 103:1-22

Of David.

¹ Praise the LORD, my soul;

all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

² Praise the LORD, my soul,

and forget not all his benefits—

³ who forgives all your sins

and heals all your diseases,

⁴ who redeems your life from the pit

and crowns you with love and compassion,

⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things

so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

⁶ The LORD works righteousness

and justice for all the oppressed.

⁷ He made known his ways to Moses,

his deeds to the people of Israel:

⁸ The LORD is compassionate and gracious,

slow to anger, abounding in love.

⁹ He will not always accuse,

nor will he harbor his anger forever;

¹⁰ he does not treat us as our sins deserve

or repay us according to our iniquities.

¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth,

so great is his love for those who fear him;

¹² as far as the east is from the west,

so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

¹³ As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him;
¹⁴ for he knows how we are formed,
he remembers that we are dust.
¹⁵ The life of mortals is like grass,
they flourish like a flower of the field;
¹⁶ the wind blows over it and it is gone,
and its place remembers it no more.
¹⁷ But from everlasting to everlasting
the LORD's love is with those who fear him,
and his righteousness with their children's children—
¹⁸ with those who keep his covenant
and remember to obey his precepts.
¹⁹ The LORD has established his throne in heaven,
and his kingdom rules over all.
²⁰ Praise the LORD, you his angels,
you mighty ones who do his bidding,
who obey his word.
²¹ Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts,
you his servants who do his will.
²² Praise the LORD, all his works
everywhere in his dominion.
Praise the LORD, my soul.

It is Thanksgiving.

As we do every year at Thanksgiving, I ask the same questions once again:
“How has this past year been for you?”
“Have you harvested much this year?”

This year, the Dow, Nasdaq, and S&P indexes reached all-time highs, so those who invested in the stock market likely saw a great financial harvest.

On the other hand, among those running small businesses, some may have struggled due to the poor economy.

Some households may be overflowing with joy because of good news at home or work, while others may be facing the opposite.

There are those enjoying good health, and others who are suffering from physical illness.

Some may be wrestling with conflicts arising from relationships—with family, friends, or business partners.

Where there is joy, sorrow stands beside it...

Yesterday seemed happy, today feels unfortunate, and tomorrow may be filled with anxiety...

Such is life.

And yet, there is a reason why we, as believers, must always live with gratitude toward God.

Through this psalm, David tells us what we ought to be thankful for as we live in this world.

David was someone who went through many hardships in life.

This psalm was written as he stood at the twilight of his life, reflecting on the years that had passed.

But what is remarkable is that within this psalm, we find no trace of resentment or complaint about the undeserved suffering he had endured.

There is only gratitude for God's grace shown to him and to Israel—especially for God's mercy and steadfast love—and a longing that this steadfast love of God would continue upon himself and upon his descendants forever.

This psalm is composed of three parts (1-5, 6-19, 20-22):

The middle section describes the character and works of the LORD; the first section calls upon himself; and the final section calls upon the heavenly hosts and all creation to Praise the LORD.

David Praises the LORD his God with all his heart, soul, and strength. And he keeps all of the LORD's benefits close to his heart.

¹ Praise the LORD, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

² Praise the LORD, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—

David Praises the LORD, overflowing with deep emotion and joy for God's grace that rises from the depths of his heart.

Though it sounds as if he is exhorting himself, in truth, it is his sincere desire to praise God expressed in that way.

David then lists, one by one, the gracious acts God has bestowed upon him. He says that God has forgiven all his iniquities, healed all his diseases, redeemed his life from destruction, and crowned him with steadfast love and mercy.

³ who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,

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

The most important blessing is the forgiveness of sins and the redemption of one's life from destruction.

The phrase "He crowns you" means that God grants us the authority to become His children and makes us a royal priesthood.

David was a man who committed sins that seemed unforgivable.

While his loyal soldier Uriah was away at war fighting for the king and the nation, David committed adultery with Uriah's wife, Bathsheba.

When Bathsheba became pregnant, David attempted to cover up the matter by calling Uriah back from the battlefield so that he would sleep with his wife.

But because of Uriah's integrity, the scheme failed.

In the end, David drove Uriah into the front lines to be killed in order to hide his own wrongdoing—thus adding murder to his adultery.

Afterward, he took Bathsheba as his wife.

Even after committing such terrible sins, David grew numb under the comforts of royal power and felt no guilt until the prophet Nathan confronted him. Only then did he recognize his sin.

Afterward, David was tormented by unbearable guilt, and both his heart and body became afflicted.

Yet when David fell before God in tears and repented, God forgave all his sins and healed all his diseases.

He restored both his heart and his body completely.

David confesses that God redeemed him—with lovingkindness and mercy—and made him whole, even though he deserved to die.

“Lovingkindness” refers to covenantal love—unbreakable and steadfast.

“Mercy” describes the way a pregnant mother fiercely protects and cherishes the child in her womb.

In addition, David says that God satisfies his desires with good things and renews him like the eagle.

⁵who satisfies your desires with good things

so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

God satisfies all our needs and grants us strength and vitality like that of an eagle.

God not only forgave David for his great and seemingly unforgivable sin and saved his life, but also gave him the right to become a child of God and raised him to the position of a royal priest.

David, who blessed the Lord for satisfying the desires of his heart and renewing his youth like the eagle's, goes on to speak of God's character and deeds.

He declares that God works righteousness and executes justice for all who are oppressed, judging those who oppress them.

⁶The LORD works righteousness
and justice for all the oppressed.

⁷He made known his ways to Moses,
his deeds to the people of Israel:

God heard the cries of the Israelites as they groaned under Pharaoh's oppression, and He remembered the covenant He had made with Abraham.

In His faithfulness, He brought them out of Egypt after they had lived as slaves for 400 years.

He sent ten plagues upon Pharaoh, who refused to let His people go, parted the Red Sea so that they could walk through it on dry ground, and took them as His own people.

He also commanded Moses and the Israelites to bear witness to the God who redeemed them through the blood of the Passover lamb.

He is a God who is abundant in compassion and grace, slow to anger, and rich in steadfast love.

Yet despite the great favor God had shown them, the Israelites failed to treasure His blessings deeply in their hearts.

Throughout their wilderness journey, every time hardship arose, they repeatedly responded with grumbling and complaints.

Even so, God persevered with them to the end and led them into the promised land of Canaan.

Seeing this, we may wonder how God could remain faithful to His covenant with such a rebellious people.

The reason God was able to do so lies in His very nature—His abundant mercy and steadfast love.

If God did not extend compassion and lovingkindness, but instead judged strictly according to the regulations of the Law and each person's violations, then no one in the world would be able to stand before Him.

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

⁹He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;

¹⁰he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.

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

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

¹³As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him;

¹⁴for he knows how we are formed,
he remembers that we are dust.

God, who knows the frailty of human beings, shows steadfast love and compassion to those who fear Him, granting complete forgiveness of sins.

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us, and He does not hold His anger forever.

The steadfast love of the Lord is everlasting, and it extends forever to those who fear Him—and to their children after them from generation to generation.

¹⁵ The life of mortals is like grass,
they flourish like a flower of the field;
¹⁶ the wind blows over it and it is gone,
and its place remembers it no more.
¹⁷ But from everlasting to everlasting
the LORD's love is with those who fear him,
and his righteousness with their children's children—
¹⁸ with those who keep his covenant
and remember to obey his precepts.
¹⁹ The LORD has established his throne in heaven,
and his kingdom rules over all.

God is able to act in this way because, unlike human beings, He sits on His eternal throne and rules over all creation.

David clearly explains who it is that fears the LORD.

Those who fear the LORD are the ones who keep His covenant and remember His commandments to obey them.

Then what is the covenant we are to keep?

It is the covenant of grace—the Messianic covenant—established with Abraham and with David.

The relationship with God that was broken because of sin cannot be restored through the works-based covenant—the Mosaic Sinai covenant.

What restores the relationship severed by original sin is the covenant of grace—the Messianic covenant, the gospel—passed down from the protoevangelium to the Abrahamic covenant and then to the Davidic covenant.

The covenant of works—the Mosaic Sinai covenant, the Law—cannot restore our relationship with God, for all humans, because of their sinful nature, inevitably fall into sin.

After describing the character and works of the LORD, David concludes the psalm by summoning the LORD's heavenly hosts around His throne and all creation—those made and ruled by God—to once again

Praise the LORD.

²⁰ Praise the LORD, you his angels,
you mighty ones who do his bidding,
who obey his word.

²¹ Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts,
you his servants who do his will.

²² Praise the LORD, all his works
everywhere in his dominion.

Praise the LORD, my soul.

Beloved members of Church of Godly Dreams,

David endured countless undeserved hardships that left him discouraged, and he also suffered deep guilt, with his heart and body afflicted because of sins he himself had committed.

Yet in the end, he did not fix his eyes on his circumstances, but on God—abundant in steadfast love and mercy.

God forgave all David's sins, healed all his diseases, redeemed his life, granted him the authority of a child, and made him a priest.

David remembered these benefits of God throughout his life and blessed the LORD.

Like David, we too encounter many hardships in this world, at times falling into despair amid suffering. We also commit sins through momentary poor judgment and find ourselves tormented by guilt.

Yet even in those very moments, remember that God pours out His steadfast love and mercy upon those who fear Him.

God's lovingkindness and mercy are not limited to David alone—they extend to the covenant people of Israel, to their descendants, and to all believers who fear the LORD.

When we look not at our circumstances but at God—abundant in lovingkindness and mercy—and when we fear Him, God will satisfy us with what is best.

And the very best thing for us is the restoration of our life.

Without God's lovingkindness and mercy, there would be no way for our lives to be restored, for we would have no means of solving our eternal problem—the problem of sin.

Yet God, knowing this, showed His lovingkindness and mercy by giving His only Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross, paying the full price for our sins and granting us complete and eternal forgiveness.

Through Him, we have received eternal life.

We praise the LORD, who—though we had no merit and were sinners—made us His covenant people, forgave our sins through His steadfast love and mercy, and granted us eternal life.