**In True Awakening: Worship Through Consecration**

**Psalm 103 (ESV)**

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*Of David.*

***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 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!*

Several years ago, I had one of those “Aha!” moments. It was one of those experiences when sort of the curtain opens and you discover something about yourself and something about a problem that had been standing in the way of joy in God. I had been reading Charles Spurgeon, as I often do, and there was a line that Charles Spurgeon wrote that sort of smacked me like a spiritual two-by-four, over the forehead. He wrote this: “We are too prone to engrave our trials in marble and write our blessings in sand.”

As I read that, I thought, “That’s what I have been doing!” All the blessings of God are kind of in the sand. They’re there for a moment and I acknowledge them, but then they’re forgotten. All these troubles, all these difficulties, I keep going back to them over and over again. I realized that this is not a small problem, but a significant one. It’s a soul infection that knocks us down emotionally, knocks us down spiritually. It feeds grumbling. It starves gladness. It fuels self-pity. It douses the fire of gratitude. So I wonder, do you ever find yourself rehearsing in your heart the perceived wrongs of your life? Beloved, it is a deadly illness that needs a remedy. And it’s no small matter because it has major influence upon us. God provides us with a cure, and that cure is Psalm 103. Whenever we find ourselves doing this, writing our trials or troubles in marble and writing our blessings in sand, let’s go back, run back to Psalm 103. The main idea that God presents to us in this psalm is that we are to write God’s blessings in marble so that we can live in joyful worship of God every day.

David begins this psalm with a personal commitment to the Lord. He knows that worship is not driven by our natural impulses. It’s not driven by emotional circumstances. But truly, worship is driven by a spiritual consecration of our lives to the Lord. So he begins the psalm by speaking to his own soul. And he speaks to his own soul about a commitment that he must make to the Lord to give the Lord joyful worship, to bless Him. So if you’re taking notes this morning, let’s mark that David begins this psalm with

**A Personal Consecration to Worship God**

***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,*

Notice again, he is speaking to himself, to his own soul. He knows that his heart is prone to wander from worship. He knows that a God-centered life must be fought for or a self-centered life will take over. And so David is preaching a sermon to his own soul. He says, “Soul, make God your treasure. Soul, do not drift from what you know to be true; namely, that God is good! Soul, you will be tempted by the hardness of life to begin to doubt God’s very goodness. Don’t let that happen! Soul, make it a practice to begin each day and end each day by blessing the Lord with everything you have. Not just lightly, but with a wholehearted praise to God.”

Brothers and sisters, we need to do what David did. And that is, commit ourselves to worship, to bless the Lord with everything that is in us. You see, if we don’t consecrate ourselves to worship, we will lose a heart of worship. It’s just not natural to us. Our flesh is too strong and we have to consciously say, “This is what I will do. It is my commitment.” If we lose our heart of worship, we will lose everything that truly matters. I don’t think we could say anything more significant to our soul than what David says to his.

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

What does it mean to bless the LORD? To “bless” simply means to worship the Lord by saying good words, praising words about Him and to Him. Blessing the Lord means we give Him thanks. It means we adore Him, we admire Him, we acknowledge His goodness both with our life and with our lips. We say things to the Lord as an expression of our heart’s admiration and appreciation and love for God.

The opposite of blessing the Lord is complaining against the Lord. It is grumbling against the Lord. It may include admiring some other god as a potential source of satisfaction. It may include some neglect of the Lord. That’s the opposite of what it means to bless Him. And David again is saying, “I’m not going to be a complainer. I’m not going to admire any other god. I’m not going to neglect praise of the true God.

I know many people who at one time were on fire for God, but now are on life support, or seem to have flat-lined in their spiritual life.How did this happen? I’ll tell you, such a disease works slowly but surely. At some point, they stopped speaking to their soul like David is speaking to his soul. They stopped fighting that gravitational pull downward, away from worship. And little by little, they wandered from their first love, from that whole-hearted passion and zeal for God. They lost their longing for God, their desire to pursue God with everything. And David recognizes that pull is real. He resists it here. He wants to grow and grow more on fire for the Lord all the way until he sees God’s face in glory. In Psalm 42, he writes this:

**Psalm 42:1-2** As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

You see, he feeds his thirst for God by saying, “Soul, you have to bless God. And as you bless God, you’re going to see God for His greatness and then you’re going to thirst for Him.” That’s the condition I want my life to constantly be in. In every season, I want to have this soul thirst for God Himself. Jesus urges us toward this kind of soul thirst for God when He addresses a question that a young lawyer asked Him.

**Matthew 22:36-37** “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

With everything that is in you, bless His holy name! That’s what it means to keep the Law. Paul echoes this same yearning in Philippians 3.

**Philippians 3:8** Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ.

I continue to press on and strive to bless the Lord. I know that that’s the very meaning of life.

There is a great difference between a reporter who observes and a soldier who fights. Did you know that?My son, Daniel, tells us that occasionally reporters go up in the Air Force planes with them to report on the conflict against ISIS and other terror groups. The reporter tries to look like a soldier and talk like a soldier, but everyone knows that he is not a soldier. In the church, we have too many reporters and not enough soldiers. There are too many who write about God, who talk about God, who even think about God, but do not actually experience God. So we have to ask ourselves, “Am I a soldier engaged? Or am I a reporter observing?”

Some reporters are former soldiers. And that’s a tragedy in the church. At one point, you were engaged with God. You experienced Him. You had this soul-thirst for God Himself. But somehow, you backed off and you hardly even recognized what was happening. But you realize, “Now I’m talking about God, but there’s no fire in my belly for Him.” God calls us to be soldiers all of our lives, all the way to the end. We’re to be active in our walk and in our worship. Let us pray, “Lord, daily may we come before you and experience your greatness and bless your holy name with everything that is in us.” Look at verse 2. David now explains how we can stay active as a soldier, how we can have this fire inside of us, burning in zeal for God.

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

He’s saying let’s not forget any one of the blessings that God brings to our life. Again, we write our blessings in the sand. So we acknowledge them briefly, but they are erased from our memory by the wave of circumstance. David knows that forgetfulness of God’s goodness is one of the means by which our zeal for God is doused and the fire is put out. So he commits himself to etching God’s benefits in marble; to keep those benefits ever before him, to ever acknowledge them, to recognize and see the goodness of the Lord. And in seeing the goodness of the Lord, to lift up praise to God and say, “God, we recognize this goodness is from you. I want to find my soul happy in you today by recognizing your goodness, because your goodness is everywhere.”Remembering God’s goodness is like putting another log on the campfire of our worship. So now he publishes a catalog of God’s blessings.

**A Published Catalog of God’s Blessings**

He publishes five specific blessings. There are more. I would encourage you to follow David’s example by taking some time today, even before the day ends, and just start publishing some of the blessings. David gives us five that are true of every believer, but continue down that catalog and just keep writing them so that you forget none of His benefits. There are so many that it’s impossible to ever come to the end of that list. God’s many mercies precede our worship. That’s why it’s so important to remember His mercies, to remember His goodness. Paul would say this:

**Romans 12:1** I appeal to you therefore, brothers**,** by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”

If we are to consecrate ourselves to God, we must remember His mercies. It’s only in view of His mercies that anyone will ever present their bodies wholly to the Lord to say my life is yours. Spiritual remembrance awakens spiritual affections. And affections are so vital to the Christian life, to the Christian soul. Spiritual remembrance awakens spiritual affections. David highlights five specific blessings that God has provided. The first one will take a little time because it is foundational, and that is that

**Blessing #1: God Forgives**

***3*** *who forgives all your iniquity,*

David begins the list where everyone must begin. Forgiveness of sin is foundational to every other blessing. Without the forgiveness of sin, no other spiritual blessing can be enjoyed. You see, our sins are such that we’ve been cut off from God, alienated, separated from Him. We have no access to Him as the fountain of life. And so it’s God’s forgiveness that connects us to Him as the source of life. The word “forgive” means to wipe the slate clean, to pardon, to cancel a debt. God’s forgiveness is God permanently removing our sin that separates us from Him. He removes it from us so that there is no obstacle, no barrier to a right relationship with the living God. Let’s consider God’s forgiveness for a moment. There are four qualities of God’s forgiveness that I think are so precious and that cause us to bless Him when we think about the forgiveness of the Lord.

Quality #1: God’s forgiveness cost God an infinite price.

It didn’t come cheap to God, to offer this. The Bible says that just as much as God is merciful, He’s also righteous and just. He can’t look at our sin and sort of wink with a smile and say, “It’s okay. I understand.” He is infinitely just.

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

In other words, that’s God. He is going to maintain righteousness. He’s going to maintain justice, perfect justice.

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

Remember how He did that both through the Law, but also through a response to sin. Those who disobeyed perished in the wilderness. And then David goes on to quote from Exodus 34.

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

That is God’s nature. But he is reminding us that God’s mercy doesn’t cancel God’s righteousness. It is not as though God’s mercy is heavier than God’s righteousness and outweighs it. No, both are absolutely perfect. And in Christ, God’s justice and God’s grace are equally upheld. That’s what is required in order for forgiveness to come to us.

David is very aware of the context of Exodus 34, from which he quotes. It’s when the Lord tells Moses that the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. But in Exodus 34:7, after God explains that He is a God who forgives iniquity and transgression and sin, he says, “but I’m also a God who will by no means clear the guilty. If you’re guilty, you’re in trouble. My justice will fall.” God never leaves the guilty unpunished. Never, never, never, never leaves the guilty unpunished!

So if we are all guilty, how can we be free from punishment? How could we be forgiven by God? The answer is that God places the punishment that your sins and my sins deserve upon His Son. He doesn’t clear the guilty without paying the price for the guilty. And that’s why forgiveness comes to God at infinite cost to Himself. Isaiah speaks of this when he prophesies about the Messiah to come.

**Isaiah 53:5 NIV** But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

What grace! Friends, when we think of the forgiveness of God, let’s never think that God is like that kind of grandfatherly person who has lost His zeal for righteousness. Let us not think that He looks at our sin and He smiles and says, “Oh, that’s okay. Everybody does that.” No, His perfect justice must be satisfied, or He wouldn’t be righteous, and He is infinitely righteous! The Father offers His own Son, Jesus, as a sacrifice for us, in our place. On the cross, Jesus willingly and fully satisfied the demands of God’s justice. Jesus takes our punishment upon Himself and is treated by God the Father as though He committed our sins. This is unfathomable! We can’t possibly grasp the staggering dimensions of what God did that day when Jesus died on the cross. What cost He suffered! We can’t possibly grasp those staggering dimensions, but we can say,

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

I am forgiven by God, whose Son received all the punishment my sins deserve in His own Person. His blood ran red so that my sins would be washed white. Bless the LORD, O my soul!

Look at verse 8 just briefly. There’s a little word there that I think is helpful.

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

The LORD is slow to anger.The Hebrew expression translated “slow to anger” is an idiom. It literally means He is “long in the nostrils.” What does that figure of speech mean? When a person gets really angry, what do they do? Their nostrils flare. God says He is long in the nostrils. When He looks at us, He no longer flares His nostrils. His nostrils are calm because He is calm. He is not angry with us anymore because our sins have been removed

Quality #2: God’s forgiveness covers every sin.

***3*** *who forgives all your iniquity,*

You might circle the word “all.” No person can sin so deeply as to sin past the measure of God’s forgiveness in Christ. Remember David committed adultery. He committed then murder in covering up his sin of adultery. And yet, God’s forgiveness is available for him. He is washed! God’s forgiveness never minimizes the seriousness of our sin, the wickedness of our sin, but it does magnify His own amazing grace. I love 1 John 1!

**1 John 1:7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

What causes us to have fellowship with other sinners is God and His light that we walk in. And then the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all our sin. Imagine that! Every one, every part!

Quality #3: God’s forgiveness is forever.

God will never ever, ever bring up our sins to us once He has forgiven them in Christ.

***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.*

What a great picture! How far is the east from the west? It’s an infinite distance. That is how far God has removed our sin from us. God keeps an infinite distance between us and our sin. And because He does so, we don’t have to keep any distance between us and God anymore. If our sin were still attached, we dare not draw near to God who is holy and righteous. But once our sins have been separated from us by an infinite distance, now we can have boldness to draw near to Him.

One commentator observed that we cannot look both east and west at the same time. It’s a simple truth that when we are looking east, we’re not looking west. And when we are looking west, we cannot look east. God says that He removes our sins as far as the east is from the west. So when God is looking at the forgiven sinner, He’s not seeing our sin anymore. It’s to the back of Him. When God is looking at the sins that have been forgiven, God is not looking at us anymore. His wrath is still poured out. It’s poured out on Jesus on the cross. But that’s where it is. It’s separated from us as far as the east is from the west. Let’s enjoy the forgiveness that God has purchased for us on the cross. Jesus has lifted the guilt and shame of our sin from our soul. I know many believers who are tempted by Satan to continue to carry around the guilt and shame of their past sins. And I tell you to speak to your soul and say

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

And what blessing the Lord means is acknowledging what Jesus has done with that sin and living in alignment with the freedom, with the forgiveness, the cleansing that Jesus has purchased for you. Our debt is paid! It’s paid in full by the precious blood our Jesus spilled. It is in Christ that

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

It has been satisfied by Christ.

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

Amen and Amen! God does not deal with us according to our sins, but rather, He deals with us according to His Son’s sacrifice.

Quality #4: God’s forgiveness costs us nothing.

It must be received by faith. We are beggars with nothing. We have nothing to offer to God in exchange for forgiveness.

**Acts 10:43** To him (Jesus) all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him (Jesus) receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

The condition for us to benefit from God’s forgiveness is simply to come to Christ in faith. Cry out, “Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me, a sinner!” I would ask you, have you humbled yourself before God and sought His forgiveness? I urge you to come and bring your sins to Jesus. Lay them at the feet of the cross. Know that they are completely removed from you as far as the east is from the west by Jesus, who suffered the punishment that was due those sins. Just simply look up and say, “Christ, I need you to be my Savior. I’m lost without you. I need your forgiveness.” And then bless the LORD that God is faithful and just to forgive you.

**Blessing #2: God Heals**

Let’s learn to write our blessings in marble, not in sand!

***3*** *…who heals all your diseases,*

I think God is talking about physical healing here. Some wrongly teach that God promises to physically heal every believer of every disease in this life. If that were true there would be no saint that ever dies. But saints all die. In fact, in Psalm 116, God says

**Psalm 116:15** Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

The blessing of God is that God always heals us of our diseases in the way that He chooses, in the ultimate way. A hint of what God is saying here is found in John 11 where Jesus is talking to Martha about the death of her brother, Lazarus. Martha had already told Jesus, “If you had been here, my brother would not have died.” He got ill. Jesus didn’t arrive in time. At least, that’s how the family considered it. “If you had been here, if you had arrived earlier, my brother would not have died.”

**John 11:25-26** Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

Did you catch that? Even though the body dies, the body will live. Jesus is saying, “This is not the end. In me, healing is always made complete, even over this body that you see lying in a tomb right now. That body is going to live. This is a temporary state even for that body. The soul is already in the presence of God.” And from Lazarus’ experience, he didn’t really die. There was never a time when there was just simply nothingness. When he breathed his last, he was ushered into the very presence of God. Do you believe that God is a God who heals all your diseases?

Disease will eventually separate our souls from our bodies for a short time, but we will receive a physical healing both in this body as well as a spiritual healing, with our soul. Our last breath on earth is our first breath in heaven. There’s no pause between these two events. We have a God who heals us of all our diseases. And so we’re right to bless the LORD at the funeral of a dear friend or of a dear family member who knows Christ, and say, “Bless you God, for you are a God who heals all our diseases. That’s what we know about you in this moment.”

Now also though, I do believe that this is an affirmation of God’s merciful work in healing physical illness in this life as well. Often, God chooses to physically heal our bodies as we pray to Him, in order to bring glory through physical healing. And verse 3 says that when that happens, make sure you bless the Lord when you receive healing. We don’t often do that. We pray, we pray, we pray for physical healing, and then when it happens, we just go on with our life. And David says, “No, bless the Lord. He is a God who heals.” When we see healing, physical restoration, physical strengthening, it is right for us to pause and say, “Praise you God! This is your work!” We are often are like the nine lepers who Jesus healed, but didn’t come back to thank Him. There’s only one that came back to thank Him. That was a Samaritan.

**Luke 17:15-18** Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus answered, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?”

Friends, we are right to remember to bless the LORD in times of physical healing. God often heals in amazing ways; miraculous ways. We have a number of people here this morning in this service and the next, who were told by physicians over ten years ago that they didn’t have long to live. And they’re here! God had different plans than what the physicians discerned. And we’re right to bless the LORD when God heals a person from a deadly disease.

But we’re also right to bless the LORD when God heals in what we call sort of more normal kinds of circumstances; when God heals our little three-year-old who has such a terrible fever at midnight, when God heals a cut that has been infected, when God heals a sprained back that has been hurting us so terribly. We pray for God’s healing, and yet we forget that God answers our prayers. David says, “No, that’s not going to be me. I’m telling my soul, ‘Soul, when God heals, wherever you see it in little ways or in big ways or even in the ultimate way, soul, bless the LORD and recognize He is the God who heals every time.’”

**Blessing #3: God Redeems**

***4*** *who redeems your life from the pit,*

The word “redeem” means to recover ownership by paying a specified sum. Jesus didn’t merely pay the penalty of our sin. Jesus paid so as to purchase us so that we would become His own dear possession. Prior to coming to Christ, a person is enslaved to sin. Enslavement to sin always is a life of death. It’s always a life of darkness. When we come to Christ, He redeems us. He purchases us. So now we’re part of His very family. We’re no longer orphans. We’re children of God. God is now our Father. We’re no longer outside His family. We’re inside it. We’re precious sons and daughters. And once we are a son or daughter of God as a result of Christ’s redemption of us, we are never alone, never abandoned, never forsaken, never in need, never unloved, never forgotten. Let’s write that blessing in marble and not in sand. God has redeemed me to be part of His people, His own possession.

**Blessing #4: God Loves**

***4*** *…who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,*

I love the way that David uses the idea of crowning us. God crowns us with steadfast love. What a picture! It’s not just sort of He dips a little bit or splashes some love on. He crowns us with His steadfast love. When a prom queen wears her crown, how is she feeling? She feels regal. She feels significant. She feels special. She walks lightly and with gladness and with a sense of esteem because the crown symbolizes her peers’ approval of her. Friends, our crown is so much greater. We have this crown that has enabled God’s steadfast love that God sings over us with rejoicing. God loves us securely. And we can walk through this world, regardless of how difficult it is, regardless of whoever else rejects us, and we can know “Bless the LORD! He is a God who loves me. He set His love upon me.” Praise God for that!

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

Write this blessing in marble, not in sand!

**Blessing #5: God Satisfies**

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

Our God is the only one who can satisfy us, truly satisfy us. Satan and our own flesh looks for satisfaction in every other place. But David says no other place will bring about a satisfied life. Only God is the God who satisfies. And He satisfies in such a way so that internally, we feel younger and younger, stronger and stronger as we walk through life experiencing the satisfaction, the fulfillment, the purposefulness, the meaning of life itself through Christ.

Perhaps some of you are considering your life and you say, “Man, something is missing in my life.” I can guarantee you that the Tempter is going to tell you what is missing. That something is a new job. That something is a new relationship with some guy or gal. That something is the next party. It’s the next experience. It’s the next freedom from moral constraints. There are thousands of something’s, idols that Satan and our own flesh are deceived into believing would lead us to a satisfied life. But only the God of the Bible can satisfy us. So let’s write God’s blessings in marble so that we live in joyful worship of God every day.

**A Purposeful Comparison between God and Man**

I’m going to walk through this rather quickly to get to the end. It helps us to bless the Lord when we consider God in reference to us, when we consider God’s greatness in reference to our smallness. Whenever we start getting puffed up and thinking much of ourselves and much of our own life, we lose our ability to bless the Lord. And so David comes back here.

***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.*

He’s making a couple comparisons here.

Comparison #1: God is the Creator; we are the created.

That is humbling, that we are dust. We came from dust and to dust we will return. That’s the physical nature of our lives. Were it not for God’s future redemption of the body, that’s where we would be. So next time you’re tempted to think pretty highly of yourself, stoop down and just grab a little handful of dirt and say to yourself, “Dirt, you are me. I came from you and to you I am going.” It kind of helps us put things in perspective. God did something amazing with that dirt. He made you in His image, don’t get me wrong. But it’s God that did that, not you. And this is who we are left to ourselves, without God.

Comparison #2: God is eternal; this present life is short.

Without God, I am perishing. I am moving toward death. And I’m moving faster toward death than I want to admit. But with God, my life is tied to eternity. My life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ who is my life appears, I will appear with Him in glory. What an amazing promise!

David finishes where he began, not only with a personal commitment to praise God, but with a public invitation.

**A Public Call to Worship God**

As he has been rehearsing this list of God’s blessings, his soul is now bursting. He recognizes that it’s not enough for just him to recognize and enjoy the greatness of God. He wants everyone and everything in this world to recognize His greatness. He says

***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!*

God is so great that once we capture a sense of His greatness and begin praising Him, we look around and say, “I need to encourage others to bless Him with me. It’s not enough to bless Him by myself.” Our joy is not made complete until we worship. But then we recognize that our joy will be made more complete as others gather with us to worship and give praise to God.

I had a great joy of going on a golf outing. I had fun with Pastor Lyall and Steve Shultz, who works here at our church as well. It’s one of those scrambles; everybody play the best ball. So we were a team together. And there was one point where Pastor Lyall hit like a 30 foot putt. It was amazing! “Wow!” We’re all screaming and fist bumping. It was super! And then there was another time that Steve hit a 30 foot putt. “Yes! This is fantastic!” Toward the end of the day, we were off the green about 10 feet and I hit a terrible shot. I just bashed it. It was supposed to be a nice delicate shot that rolls up to the hole. It was just screaming across the green, but then it hit the flag stick really hard and disappears in the cup. (Laughter!) “Look what I did!”

Now, if Pastor Lyall had gone out to the golf course by himself and he hit a 30 foot putt and nobody was there, would he enjoy it? Yes, he would. If Steve hit a 30 foot putt all by himself would he enjoy it? Yes, he would. If I had hit that thing and hit the pin and then dropped it, would I have enjoyed it? Yes, I would. But I’ll tell you, I wouldn’t have enjoyed it near as much as when other people are with me. As a result of Lyall hitting that putt, I was able to have joy even though I wasn’t the one who hit it. When Steve hit that putt, I had joy. I entered into it. And I think my joy multiplied their joy. And I know that when I hit that and they all screamed and came over to high-five me, that doubled my joy. I’m just saying that when we worship God, this is why the church is so central to our lives and to the praise of God. Let’s encourage one another all the more when we worship Him together.

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