

Stir Your Soul to Bless Your God

Psalm 103:1-22

Halifax: 6 February 2005

Introduction

- Today I want to break from our series in Matthew to present to you a new Psalm of focus.
- As most of you know, every few weeks, I preach from a Psalm that corresponds to our regular sermon series.
 - That Psalm then becomes our “Psalm of Focus” which we sing each week in our morning worship service.
- In our study of Matthew’s Gospel,
 - we are just now entering the third trio of miracles that Matthew records for us in his presentation of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee.
 - The particular focus of this last trio is Christ’s compassion.
 - In looking at this set of miracles over the next few weeks,
 - we can do nothing better than bless God for His great mercies to us.
 - You will remember that when the Bible speaks of “blessing God,”
 - it does not mean that we bless God in the way that He blesses us—
 - by doing something for Him that will enrich Him...
 - There is nothing we can do for Him like that...
 - But we bless Him when we praise Him for His excellence and kindness...
 - To bless God is to praise Him with ardent affection.
 - To help us do this, I have selected Psalm 103 for our Psalm of Focus.
 - Psalm 103 is all about blessing the Lord.
 - It is a delightful Psalm of pure praise...
 - There is no petition in it and no complaint.
 - What an antidote it ought to be to the sluggishness we often feel at this time of year as the winter month’s drag along!

I. Oh Christian, stir up your soul to bless the LORD.

- Three times in Psalm 103 you urge your soul to bless the LORD:
- Three times you sing, “Bless the LORD, O my soul.”

A. The Psalm starts off with this self-exhortation:

- “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name.”

1. Surely you need to soliloquise with your soul about this...

a. Do you not find that your soul is far too sluggish about this most excellent and important work?

- Do you not find in yourself more readiness to bless your neighbour than to bless your God?
- Do you not find that you are more ready to bless the gifts of God and the works of God and the provision of God than you are to bless God Himself?
- Do you not find that you are more ready to engage your lips in God’s praise than your soul?

b. Surely you need to have a talk to your soul about this!

1) “Soul, it is not proper for me to worship God without you...

- You must worship also—you must commune with Him and delight in Him and bless His name.
- You must awaken from your slumber and praise His name!”

2) The LORD is a great God and you must bless His holy name...

- He is holy in all His being,
 - Holy in His power, Holy in His wisdom, Holy in His justice, Holy in His goodness, Holy in all His acts.
 - In His whole eternal and infinite being there is no imperfection at all.”

- Surely a God like that calls for you to bless Him with your whole being...

- Surely you should praise Him with all that is within you!

- As an old writer said:

- Let your *conscience* "bless the Lord," by unvarying fidelity.
- Let your *judgment* bless Him, by decisions in accordance with his word.
- Let your *imagination* bless him, by pure and holy musings.
- Let your *affections* praise him, by loving whatsoever he loves.
- Let your *desires* bless him, by seeking only his glory.
- Let your *memory* bless him, by not forgetting any of his benefits.

- Let your *thoughts* bless him, by meditating on his excellencies.
- Let your *hope* praise him, by longing and looking for the glory that is to be revealed.
- Let your every *sense* bless him by its fealty,
- Let your every *word* bless him by its truth,
- Let your every *act* bless him by its integrity.

TRANS> Let nothing be left out:

- “Bless the LORD O my Soul, and all that is within me.”
2. And even as this Psalm begins with a wake up call, so you should begin all things that have to do with your life!
 - a. So you should open each day,
 - When you get up in the morning, say, “Bless the LORD, O my soul.”
 - This should be your focus as you enter your daily work.
 - b. So you should open each week...
 - On the first Day of the week, begin your week in public and private worship, preparing yourself to bless the Lord...
 - c. And so you should begin each new phase of your life...
 - When you begin your career, say, “Bless the LORD, O my soul.”
 - When you begin your marriage say, “Bless the LORD, O my soul.”
 - When you begin with each new child say, “Bless the LORD, O my soul.”
 - d. Blessing God is your first and principle duty...
 - There is no other reason to live but to behold the glory of God and to declare His praise.
 - If you have not begun already, begin now to bless Him.

TRANS> But it is not enough to **begin** blessing the LORD;

B. You must also stir yourself up to bless Him at the **end**!

- The Psalm ends just as it begins: “Bless the LORD, O my soul.”
1. This final self-exhortation follows the exhortation to angels and all God’s works to bless His name in v. 20-22:
 - Ps 103:20-22: Bless the LORD, you His angels, Who excel in strength, who do His word, Heeding the voice of His word. Bless the LORD, all *you* His hosts, *You* ministers of His, who do His pleasure. Bless the LORD, all His works, In all places of His dominion.
 - a. It is not that the angels need our prodding!

- They daily behold the glorious majesty of God and are ever full of praises!
- We do not call these mighty beings who are ever ready to do God's will because they are lax...
 - We call them to arouse ourselves all the more...

b. If you love God,

- Surely you are stimulated by their example,
 - for though the great men of the earth do not praise Him,
 - these higher and more beings are full of His praise...
- Surely you are comforted to know, after you look at your own weak praise, that at least they are praising Him...
 - Not with a comfort that makes you slack, but with a comfort that compels you to go on in your own praise!
- Surely you see that if they are praising Him,
 - How much more should all other things in heaven and earth!
 - How much more should you!

2. And so you must not stop blessing God at the end and say, my work is done,

- but after you have sung this Psalm you must still stir your soul to bless Him still...
 - The great work of blessing God is never to end...
- a. It is not enough to begin your day with praise if you do not end with praise...
- b. It is not enough to begin your week blessing His name if you do not end the week blessing His name...
- c. Nor is it enough to begin your life in Christ blessing His name if you are not found praising Him on your deathbed.

TRANS> At the end, you should have even more reasons to bless Him than you did at the beginning...

- But the only way that will be so is if you have blessed Him all along the way.
 - All along the way you must remember His gracious benefits or you will have nothing at the end!

C. And so in singing this Psalm, you repeat the exhortation to your soul with these words:

- "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits."

1. This is no vain repetition!
 - All your life long you will have to stir yourself to this work.
 - What vain creatures we are!
 - How quickly we slip away from this excellent work!
2. Do you not find that you continually slip away from blessing His name because you forget all His benefits?
 - Just look at your wretched memory!
 - The fall has affected your memory so that you remember all the afflictions and all the heartache...
 - But you forget the marvellous blessings that God has lavished upon you if you even recognise them at all!
 - **Remember** what He has done and bless His name!

TRANS> This is the subject of the rest of this Psalm!

- It calls to remembrance all the reasons you have to bless God!
 - It is a grand review of all His benefits!
 - It lists them out so that you will never be short of reasons to praise Him.
- First, it guides you to bless the LORD for all the benefits He bestows...
 - Then it guides you to bless Him for all the benefits He **continues** to bestow, despite our sin and weakness.
- I will follow this same order.

II. **First, Psalm 103:3-7 guides you to bless the Lord for the benefits He bestows...**

- A. There are those benefits that bring you out of your misery...
 1. There is no pretence in this happy Psalm that there is no misery...
 - It speaks to fallen men and women, under the guilt, corruption, and curse of sin...
 - God's benefits do not meet you first in heaven, but first in your estate of sin and misery...
 - How welcome they are in such a wretched condition!
 2. The first and principle benefit is in verse 3—
 - “He forgives all your iniquities!”

- a. This is the fountain of all other blessings that follow...
 - Until you are reconciled to God,
 - your sin is a barrier that keeps out all the other benefits...
 - Not one of them can reach you until this barrier is removed.

- b. And that is just what forgiveness is...
 - It is the removal of all your sin from your record...
 - Through Jesus Christ, we have the remission of all our sins...
 - Original sin and actual sin...
 - Sins of omission and sins of commission...
 - Sins of the heart and sins of the tongue...
 - Sins of intent and sins of action...
 - All are forgiven in Jesus Christ the moment you believe in Him.
 - They are immediately struck from the record and will never be held against you again.

- c. This is what brings you out of the darkness of God's anger and into the sunshine of His favour!
 - To have God's smile restored is to have everything!
 - His favour is better than life.
 - Bless Him for forgiving all your iniquities!

TRANS> The next benefit is closely related to forgiveness...

3. "He heals all your diseases."

- a. Whenever God forgives sin, He also pours out His Spirit to give us new life...
 - Not only are your sins and iniquities remembered no more...
 - But His law is also written in your heart so that you desire to do His will, teaching you to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts.
 - This is none other than the healing of your sin sick soul!
 - The lunacy of pride is removed
 - The fever or anger is cooled
 - The leprosy of covetousness is cleansed
 - The paralysis of slothfulness is healed
 - He heals them all—
 - First when He renews us at conversion to turn us against them all...
 - And finally at the end when He purges us from the last vestige of corruption.

- b. Not only does He heal us from these spiritual maladies,
 - But Jesus also joins us to His immortal body and promises to free our bodies from all corruption on the day of resurrection.
 - Though our bodies decay now, this mortal will put on immortality.

TRANS> Bless God who heals you of all your diseases!

- 4. And finally, He is said to “redeem your life from destruction.”
 - a. The fall brought us into a terrible death—
 - a death that separated us from God and made us unable to enjoy Him or serve Him...
 - But in His great mercy, God restores us again to life in Jesus Christ.
 - You who belong to Him are new creations in Christ Jesus, created for good works.
 - You who were dead in sin are made alive to know God and serve God forever.
 - b. Not only that, but the death into which we fell was also the curse of God which reaches its full expression in Hell...
 - The destruction from which you are redeemed includes redemption from that awful, final, irreversible torment of Hell...
 - Jesus Christ redeemed you when He suffered the pains of Hell in your place...
 - Bless God, you are redeemed from destruction!

TRANS> So you see how wonderfully and graciously God brings you out of all misery...

- misery that you brought upon yourself by sin!
- But He does not stop His blessing there!
 - It is not enough for Him to end your misery...

B. He also lavishes you with many riches!

- 1. First He is said to “crown you with lovingkindness and tender mercies!” (v. 4)
 - a. To crown someone is to honour them...
 - And here is the greatest of all honours!
 - God brings us into His own lifelong friendship and care!
 - His lovingkindness is His covenant bond of favour...

- His tender mercies speak of the warm and tender affection with which we are surrounded.

b. Matthew Henry says:

- “What greater dignity is a poor soul capable of than to be advanced into the love and favour of God.”
- Brothers and sisters, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords has brought you to live in His house, to sit at His feet, and to eat at His table!
 - How amazing!
 - Be humbled by it and bless the Lord!

TRANS> And with this precious crown, the next blessing freely flows to us...

- He who has brought us into such loving and sweet relations will not fail to...

2. “Satisfy your mouth with good things!”

a. A woman may have an admirer who tries to satisfy her but cannot...

- He does not have what it takes to please her...
- He does not have the wisdom to meet her needs...

b. But when God Almighty deigns to satisfy you,

1) There is no deficiency at all!

- Our cup runs over!
- There is no uncertainty—
 - The heaven He has prepared for us will be heaven to us!
 - He knows how to delight us and satisfy us for all eternity, and He will do it!
 - There will be no boredom, no sorrow, no deficiency...
 - only the purest and richest satisfaction.

2) And even now He blesses us with good things—

- giving us the fruits of the Spirit... love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, self-control...
- giving us the assurance of His love and joy in His fellowship...
- giving us grace to continue serving Him through all our infirmities and trials.

3. And this is how we are continually rejuvenated as long as we are in this world...

- “your youth is renewed like the eagles.”

- a. Yes, there are times of temptation and times of testing and times of sorrow,
 - But God always pours out His grace to renew His children...
 - Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning!
 - God's children may mourn with the owl in the desert (as in Psalm 102), but soon they will soar with the eagles once again.
- b. In His wisdom God sometimes allows His children to suffer, but He will never allow the seed of life to be crushed...
 - He will always renew your strength.
 - Soon your love is made as fresh as spring again!
 - Bless the LORD who renews your youth like the eagle's.

TRANS> And so you see—you who are Christians—

- that there are three benefits you receive from Christ that bring you out of misery...
 - And three benefits that enrich you...
- You are to bless God for all these benefits...
 - But you must not stop with blessing Him for individual benefits...

C. There are also those blessings that the LORD bestows on the church as a covenant people.

1. Verse 6 tells you that

- “The LORD executes righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed.”
- a. This is talking about the oppression of the seed of the serpent against the seed of Abraham or the seed of Christ.
 - Satan and all His seed—all who are outside Christ—persecute and oppose the people of God...
 - At times they mock them and call them foolish and backward...
 - At times they persecute them, imprison them, molest them, torture them, penalise them, and even try to kill them...
 - At other times they entice them and try to lure them away from serving Christ.
- b. When God executes righteousness and justice for them, He delivers them out of all this oppression...
 - He frees them from it so that they are able to continue to serve Him.

- 1) The classic example of this liberation is the deliverance of Israel from Egypt.
 - God redeemed them His people from Egypt in order that they might serve Him...
 - And it is properly called God's "executing righteousness" because He was keeping His covenant with Abraham...
 - God had promised to Abraham that He would deliver His descendants out of the oppression of Egypt to inherit the land that they might serve Him.
 - God is righteous in doing this, not because the people deserved to be delivered,
 - God says plainly that they did not deserve it...
 - but because God was keeping His covenant promise—
 - He is righteous and just to do what He promised to do.

- 2) Now we look at the deliverance from Egypt as a type and shadow of the greater deliverance that we now have in Christ...
 - All of God's covenant people from Abraham to you and me were delivered from oppression when Jesus rose from the dead...
 - He went to the cross to redeem us from Satan and from death and Hell.
 - By His work, the whole church—all the covenant people, all of Christ's seed, were delivered from bondage to Satan.
 - This was God "executing righteousness" as promised.
 - If God did not keep His promise,
 - He would be unrighteous and unjust,
 - But by fulfilling His promise,
 - He executes righteousness and justice for the oppressed...
 - He could not and would not leave us under the bondage of sin, death, and Satan.
 - He has brought us out of the iron furnace to serve Him!

- c. But no one can have this blessing apart from Jesus Christ!
 - It is not a blessing to this and that individual...
 - It is a blessing to Christ and all who belong to Him by faith, all His seed.

- You cannot enjoy any of the benefits of God unless you come to Jesus Christ to have them...
 - They are for the Church as a covenant body, not for detached individuals.
2. In verse 7, Psalm 103 goes on to show more about the covenantal nature of this blessing.
- a. It says:
- “The LORD made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.”
 - It is a great blessing to have God reveal His ways and His acts to anyone!
 - But He does not go to individuals to do this...
 - He has given the gospel to the church—
 - He has revealed it to the covenant people of the Old and New Testaments so that we have to come and be taught by the prophets and apostles...
 - To them He makes known His ways and His acts by which He has mercy on sinners!
 - In a word, to them He makes known the Lord Jesus Christ who is the way to God and by whose mighty acts we are saved.
- b. This passage seems to refer in particular to how Christ was revealed to Moses after Israel worshipped the golden calf...
- You will remember that God threatened to destroy the covenant people...
 - But Moses pled with God to forgive them on the basis of His covenant promise...
 - And He also pled to God at that time, saying:
 - “Show me your glory!”
 - Moses needed to see clearly what God was like—that He is a forgiving God.
 - It was then that God revealed Christ to Him...
 - In Exodus 34:6-7, the scripture says:
 - Ex 34:6-7: And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.”

- This is nothing different than what is now revealed more clearly to us in the person and work of Jesus Christ!
 - That God is a pardoning God who keeps mercy for thousands.
 - We are taught that His wrath falls upon the Lamb instead of the people.
 - That is how it was that God was able to forgive them instead of destroying them...
 - Their sins are pardoned through Jesus Christ.
- Now it is obvious that Psalm 103:8 is an extrapolation of Exodus 34:6-7:
 - Psalm 103:8: The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in mercy.
 - The Psalmist knows that He is related to God in the same way the worshippers of the golden calf were related to God...
 - By God's mercy and grace, not by any merit of his own...
 - And that is the only way that we are related to God who sing this song today.
 - Those who presume that God will forgive them apart from Christ are deluded...
 - And those who presume that they need no forgiveness at all are even more deluded.
 - All are sinners!
 - There is no other name given among men by which we must be saved...
 - Christ has been made the chief cornerstone.
 - There is no other foundation.
 - God has revealed His ways and His acts to us in His covenant with His people in Christ.
 - What an inestimable privilege it is to have this precious revelation made known to us!

TRANS> Bless the Lord for executing righteousness and justice to deliver all who are oppressed and then for making known His grace to His Church!

- Say to your soul,
 - "bless the LORD, O my soul and forget not all His benefits!"

But now I want you to see something more...

- namely, that God not only bestows these benefits...

III. He also sustains these benefits to us despite our sin and weakness...

- Neither our sin nor our weakness can keep His blessings from reaching us if we belong to Him.

A. First then, see how He continues His blessings despite our ongoing sin!

- Just look at how He treats His people!

1. Verse 8 says that He is not soon angry...

a. He is not easily provoked by the sins we commit every day—

- Think about the irreverence of your worship today—your vain thoughts before His throne!
- Think of all the things you ought to have done but have not done...
- Think about the selfish and unkind words you have spoken this week—even today!
 - Does God immediately rise up against all these sins in anger?

b. No! God is slow to anger, abounding in mercy toward His people!

- It takes a great sin in us to stir up His anger—
 - It takes a high-handed sin of defiance and rebellion.
 - The kind of sin where you are wilfully turning against Him and against His ways.
 - He is very patient with us, very longsuffering, or we would never see His smile at all.
- Bless Your God!
 - He is not soon angered with those He has placed in Christ...

2. Neither is He long angry...

a. verse 9 says, “He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever.”

- This suggests that He will at times strive with us when we have committed a high-handed sin of defiance and rebellion...
- He will not allow us to continue a separating sin without chastening us...
 - He chastens us for these sins until we repent—confessing and forsaking them.

b. But as soon as we repent, He is ready to forgive us...

- It is His promise:
 - 1 John 1:9: If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
 - His way is not to put up barriers between He and His children, but to remove them.
 - He delights in restoration and refuses to hold grudges!
 - Bless your gracious God,
 - He will not **soon** angry,
 - neither is He **long** angry.
3. And verse 10 tells us that He is not **very** angry either...
- Ps. 103:10: He has not dealt with us according to our sins nor punished us according to our iniquities.
- a. His chastisement of you is never equal to what you deserve...
- It is not nearly equal!
 - You deserve to go to Hell for every sin...
 - Even those sins He daily overlooks!
 - He does not overlook them apart from laying them on Christ...
 - But those sins He is pleased to chasten in us...
 - He does not punish so as to meet out justice,
 - but only to correct you and restore you.
- b. The fact that He doesn't judge you according to what your sins deserve should not make you think better of your sins...
- It should make you think worse of them!
 - It should pain you that you have sinned against one who is so kind to you!
 - This is a difference between a true child of God and a hypocrite.
 - The hypocrite wants to do whatever he thinks he can get away with...
 - The true child of God wants to do as much as he can to please His heavenly Father.

TRANS> The true child is the one who is said to “fear God” in verse 11—

- He will not continue in rebellion against Him.
- And you see what God does for Him!

4. Verse 11 and 12 say:

- Ps 103:11-12: For as the heavens are high above the earth, *So* great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, *So* far has He removed our transgressions from us.
- a. Bless God for His great mercy!
 - See how zealous He is to get our sin out of the way!
 - He does not want to visit it in His people,
 - He does not want to retain anger toward us,
 - He does not want to mete out justice...
 - No, no! not your merciful gracious God!
 - He wants to take that sin and carry it far away from you so that nothing will keep Him from blessing you!
- b. And so He does!
 - 1) He lays it on Jesus Christ!
 - Jesus Christ is the scapegoat who carries our sin far far away—
 - as far as the east is from the west—
 - never to be brought up against us again!
 - 2) But note well that this is not for all!
 - It is only for those who fear God!
 - God has no interest in removing sin from those who do not want to forsake their sins and draw near to Him...
 - He is not interested in forgiving the one who only wants to escape punishment but who does not want to walk with Him.

TRANS> But bless the LORD, all you who fear Him...

- For you He sustains His mercy despite your sin!
 - He removes those sins far far away!
 - He allows nothing to interrupt the continually flow of His mercies!
 - Indeed, the Psalm goes on to show that...
 - Just as He continues His benefits despite your ongoing sin...
- B. So also He sustains His mercy despite your weakness!
- See now that your weakness cannot keep His blessing from reaching you either!

1. You have nothing to fear because He pities you as a father pities his son...
 - v. 13 spells it out plainly:
 - “As a father pities *his* children, *So* the LORD pities those who fear Him.”
 - a. The Hebrew word translated **pity** is one of the most tender words in the language...
 - It speaks of that regard that a strong father has for a weak, helpless son...
 - a son who needs him and will even die without him...
 - It is the feeling of pity you would have to see your own baby lying naked and helpless in the snow with no one but you to help...
 - Your only desire would be to help!
 - That is the way God looks at us in our human frailty!
 - He doesn’t look at us in our weakness and say,
 - “What’s wrong with you lying there—
 - Get up out of the snow!”
 - b. Verse 14 says,
 - “He knows our frame, He remembers that we are dust.”
 - 1) He knows all your weaknesses—
 - He knows how prone you are to temptation...
 - He knows how weak your faith is...
 - He knows how easily you are discouraged...
 - He knows weak you are at doing what is good...
 - 2) He remembers that you are dust...
 - He knows that without Him, you can do nothing...
 - You cannot take another breath...
 - You cannot withstand another temptation...
 - You can bear no fruit at all...
 - 3) The words of verse 15-16 describe what you are in His sight..
 - Ps 103:15-16: Man! His days *are* like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, And its place remembers it no more.
 - a) You are seated here in this congregation today...
 - You are like flowers in the field...

- But in a hundred years, it is not likely that one of you will remain...
 - God sees people come and go just as we see the flowers of the wild flowers come and go.
 - They are there, then they are gone!
 - b) How transitory is your life!
 - How you need to meditate on this!
 - Your life is but a vapour—
 - It is not by your will, but by the will of God that you live and move and have your being...
 - One day, you will be gone from this place... gone forever.
2. But God,
- far from being impatient and irritated with you for your weakness
 - pities you and reaches out to you with His sustaining mercy!
 - a. If you belong to Him, it is because He has brought you in and has kept you in!
 - Jesus said, apart from Me you can do nothing.
 - You cannot wash away your sins...
 - You cannot produce peace with God...
 - You cannot maintain your life...
 - You cannot bear fruit for God...
 - You cannot continue for a moment...
 - b. But look at verse 17!
 - Psalm 103:17: But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting On those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children,
 - 1) This verse puts God who changes not right up beside you who are like the flower of the field!
 - In Hebrew, it does this in an even more vivid way... the word but is actually the simple word and...
 - “And the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting!
 - What a contrast!
 - 2) You are transitory, but God's mercy is everlasting!
 - God's mercy preceded you eternally in predestination...
 - And His mercy will remain with you into everlasting glory

- It will carry you through all the trials and temptations of this life and afterward bring you to glory.
- It will carry you through death and will keep you as a recipient of all the benefits we have spoken about this morning!
- It will remain in the earth long after you are gone to bless your children and your children's children—
 - to a thousand generations!

3) Brothers and sisters, do you see?

- The everlasting mercy of God is put up next to your transitory being...
 - When you are joined to it, you are just as secure and just permanent as God Himself!
 - Secure, not in mere existence,
 - but secure in the full blessing of God forever and ever that He is pleased to continue to bestow on you!

4) Verse 19 speaks of the everlasting firmness of God's kingdom!

- Ps 103:19: The LORD has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all.

a) His throne is not dependent on any other power but His own...

- He is not dependent on the will of any one else...
 - He is not like a politician who will be removed if the people don't agree with Him.
 - Or a king that will be overthrown if another king comes who is stronger...
- No one can threaten God or even ask Him what He does.
 - Not the smallest corner of the universe is outside of His rule.

b) His is a kingdom that is absolutely unshakable and unassailable!

- And it is this God who has made known His will to bless all those sinners who come to Him through Jesus Christ!
 - And bless them He surely will!
 - Nothing can stop Him from doing it!
 - No sin, no oppressor, no change, no weakness...
 - He will have mercy on His own and no one will stop Him...
 - He will have mercy on His own for all eternity!

TRANS> Blessed be His glorious name!

- Urge your soul to bless Him!
 - “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name!”

But all of you take heed!

- Not everyone is to be blessed!

Verse 18 spells it out plainly:

- Let me read it together with verse 17:
 - Psalm 103:17-18: But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting On those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children’s children, to such as keep His covenant, And to those who remember His commandments to do them.
 - Keeping God’s covenant and remembering His commandments to do them does not mean that you come to God in strength to pass the test and prove yourself to Him...
 - Oh no, not that at all!
 - It means you come to Him in weakness to receive all the benefits that this Psalm talks about...
 - You do not present yourself to God to be admired and measured by Him...
 - but your present yourself to Him to pitied and helped...
 - forgiven and raised up from spiritual death and blindness!
 - Keeping covenant with Him means looking to Him for mercy!
 - And remembering His commandments to do them means that you present yourself to Him as His servant to obey Him...
 - It means that you come as a little child to live in His house and to be taught all His ways.
 - Do not think for a moment that you come as a strong one.
 - You come to a Father who pities
 - You come to find help and strength from Him...
 - He is not looking for perfection from you...
 - He is looking for you to stop warring with Him...
 - He calls you to fear Him instead of fighting with Him.

Now I hope all of you can see that this is a God who is worthy to be praised!

- Rev 5:11-14: Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!” And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: “Blessing and honor and glory and power *Be* to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!” Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.