

# The Heart of our Father in 2024 (Psalm 103:6-18)

Are there some things in your life you wish you could just permanently forget. Things you wish you could UNSEE, UNhear, Undo? In 2023? Things you have thought, said, done? Things others have done to you?

**Main Point:** *Our greatest barrier to knowing God better may be how much we know about how much God truly knows about us.* We struggle with God because we feel so bad about ourselves, and if we know the truth about ourselves, think of how much more God knows us! It can be daunting. *We can't fool him. He knows all!*

Sometimes we don't want to pray or read the Bible or think about God because when we look in the mirror, we feel like saying, "You're a big disappointment" or "You ought to be a lot better by now." (milk vs. meat)

-Sam Storms captures the truth in one simple sentence: "I think we run from God rather than to him because we know our own hearts all too well and His barely at all."

That's where Psalm 103 can help us tremendously. *Perhaps no other chapter in the Bible so clearly reveals God's Heart and His compassion for His people.*

## 7 Truths About God (His Heart) you Can't afford to Forget in 2024

**1. God Loves to Help the Needy.** (I.E. YOU and me =we qualify as needy; not physically, but spiritually!)

**Vs. 6:** "The Lord performs righteous deeds and judgments [justice] for all who are oppressed.

**7 He made known His ways to Moses, His deeds to the sons of Israel."** God, as a loving Father, is compassionate toward those who are needy, toward the oppressed.

The "oppressed" are those who can't help themselves. In the Old Testament the word especially referred to widows, orphans, foreigners, & the poor/destitute. When we are tempted to take advantage of others because we are strong & they are weak, God says, "Think about that first." *He takes the side of the weak.* [Within humanity, 'survival of the fittest' is **not** God's motto.] Our God keeps his eyes on the helpless, and when others hurt them, He moves to balance the scales of justice. God intervenes to rescue the lowly/needy!

**-Are you needy?** The answer is yes whether you know it or not. *You are needy and sin oppressed; and God sees you, loves you, and is on your side.* God is fighting for us that we remain IN Him, and holy. God is a rescuing God and He is relentless in His pursuit of your heart. "He will work righteousness" within us b/c we can't do it!

**2. God Shows Mercy to Those Who Don't Deserve It.**

**Vs. 8:** "The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love"

See the four great attributes of God in this verse:

**1) The Lord is compassionate**-He sees us; He feels for our lostness, brokenness, helplessness.

**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, when we fail Him; He is merciful. **WHY?**

**4) The Lord abounds (overflows) in love**-He loves us more than we can imagine. He loved us first.

**Application:** When God saves, He saves completely -perfectly.

When He forgives, He forgives all my sins utterly.

When He sets us free, we are free forever.

The King James Version translates the last phrase of verse 8 by saying that God is "plenteous in mercy." Spurgeon (in *The Treasury of David*) takes that phrase and offers this application (italics added):

*All the world tastes of his sparing mercy,  
those who hear the gospel partake of his inviting mercy,  
the saints live by his saving mercy,  
are preserved by his upholding mercy,  
are cheered by his consoling mercy, and  
will enter heaven through his infinite and everlasting mercy.*

I like that! Six kinds of mercy in just one sentence. That's *plenteous* mercy for anyone who needs it.

**3. God Tempers His Wrath (His divine Anger toward us).**

**Vs. 9:** "He will not always contend *with* [accuse] us, Nor will He keep *His anger* forever. <sup>10</sup> He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our guilty deeds."

*Have you ever known anyone who loved to argue? We all know people who love to keep a quarrel going because they are so angry. God is not like that. He is willing to end the quarrel and welcome us back home.*

Sometimes the real problem is **that we want to keep fighting him**. He's more ready to forgive than we are to be forgiven!

When we forget to pray, He remembers to feed us.

When we forget to give thanks, He sends us restful sleep.

When we idle in sin, in love, He sends His Holy Spirit to convict us.

When we refuse to give, He keeps on giving still.

When we fall, He lifts us up.

When we disappoint ourselves and others, He still calls us his children.

"When we are faithless, He is still faithful" (2 Tim. 2:13)

-He even blesses those who don't believe in Him. (Mt. 5:45) "**He sends rain on the just/unjust**" And the fact that God withholds punishment to His enemies for a season, that too is evidence of His mercy for it's "**God's kindness that leads you toward repentance**" (Ro 2:4). =His mercy should lead to our repentance!

So we see that God is compassionate, merciful, holds back His just judgment toward us, AND

#### **4. God Forgives All Our Sins.**

**Vs. 11: "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His mercy [love] for those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our wrongdoings [transgressions] from us"**

-In Christ Jesus, b/c of God's great love, He poured out His wrath upon the Son. Jesus paid it all! For *my* sin. *Forever!*

-**Astronomers tell us that the farthest known light source from the earth is ten billion light years away. That means that light starting from that source (a quasar) would take ten billion years traveling at the speed of light to arrive at the earth. And using ion drive propulsion, you could reach the nearest star in a modern spaceship in "only" 81,000 years: You can turn it around any way you like and we are left with two inescapable realities. First, we live in a tiny corner of the universe, and second, the universe is vast beyond our comprehension. **But God's love is greater, vaster, larger, deeper, longer, broader, and bigger in all dimensions than the universe itself.** =God Proved it by sending Jesus!!! **Consider the magnitude of God's love.** Let's suppose you want to go east until you finally reach the west., you have proved that no matter how far east you go, you will never find the west.**

-*My sins are under His blood* – **erased** by His grace, they can never come back to threaten me again. =**Rom. 8:1**  
Though there are always consequences for my sin on this earth, in Heaven – **God has selective amnesia** – He chooses to forget forever!!

**THIS is great good news for all the sinners of the world.** When God forgives, He removes our sins, He lifts them up, 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. They have been covered by Jesus' blood!

Jim Nicodem says that God has . . .

**A long fuse** - "slow to anger" (v. 8),

**A short memory**- "does not harbor his anger forever" (v. 9),

**A thick skin**- "does not treat us as our sins deserve" (v. 10), and

**A great heart**- "so great is his love, so far has he removed our sins" (vv. 11-12).

I'm glad we have a God like that because that exactly the kind of God we need.

#### **5. God Understands Our Weakness.**

**Vs. 13: "Just as a father has compassion on His children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him"** =**I never understood that verse until I had children.** 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.** Our children learn that we do not worship a god of stone or an empty idol or a remote deity or an impersonal machine in the sky. We serve a Father God who knows our weakness and loves us anyway!!!

#### **6. God Remembers That We Are Fragile Creatures. (We are not as tough as we think)**

**Vs. 14: "For God knows how we are formed, He remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more"** = **we are like a package stamped: Fragile "Handle with Care"** -Our hearts/skin=tender

Here is a truth we all understand, especially in this season of the year. *Yesterday's green grass soon turns brown.* It is an inexorable law of nature that the green leaves of spring end up in a pile on your lawn. Those elements of nature

are living and dying symbols of spiritual truths in our lives. Pay attention. We are fragile, needy, dependent creatures on God (Our Creator and Sustainer).

*We are like the dust devils that blow across the dirt field. We make a big scene, then suddenly we disappear.*

## 7. God Links Us With Eternity By Linking Us With Himself.

**“But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting (eternity) for those who fear Him, and His justice [righteousness] is with their children’s children, to those who keep His covenant and remember His precepts so as to do them, to obey them.”** =Our hope is in the everlasting God!

Psalm 103 offers us one strong ground of comfort that lifts us up above the transitory nature of this life.

### **Psalm 103 offers an eternal contrast between:**

- Our sinfulness and long memory (*unable to forgive ourselves or others*) Vs. God’s short memory & longsuffering
- Our mortality =(*fading flower*) vs. God’s eternity, the everlasting God & eternally rich in mercy toward Us In Him!

Psalm 103 reminds us that in 2024 we can *never* forget: **We are richer than we think, we are more blessed than we know, and we have more than we realize.** We frail, mortal sinners are rich in the mercy of God!!

-Do you need to remind your heart of this today? Do you need to find your way back to the Lord today??

*Patrolman on night duty in a town in northern England. As he walked the streets, he heard a quivering sob. Shining his flashlight into the darkness, he saw a little boy in the shadows sitting on a doorstep and tears were running down his cheek. The child said, “I’m lost. Please take me home.” And the policeman began naming street after street, trying to help the boy remember where he lived. He named the shops and the hotels in the area but the little boy could give him no clue.*

*Then he remembered that at the center of the town there was a church with a large white cross that towered above the rest of the city. The policeman pointed to the cross and said, “Do you live anywhere near that place?” The little boy’s face immediately brightened up. He said, “**Yes, sir. Take me to the cross and I can find my way home.**” *Go to the cross and you will find your way home to God.**

Are you weak? So am I.

Are you needy? So am I.

Are you guilty? So am I.

Are you frail? So am I.

Are you like dust? So am I.

And God says to us, His weak, needy, guilty, frail, dusty children, “I know you through and through, and I love you anyway. Come to me. Rest in me. Make me your Rock.” God’s mercy in Christ is more than enough for all of us. Amen.