Elder's Corner

8. The Lord is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. 9. He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. 10. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. 11. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; (Ps. 103:8-11)

This wonderful psalm penned by David is a masterpiece. He opens the psalm with an exhortation not just to **bless the Lord,** but to make it a whole-hearted blessing: **Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! (Ps. 103:1)** It was not to be lip service with **hearts far from the Lord**—something that Israel was so often guilty of **(Isa. 29:13),** and we can be as well. One who has studied this psalm writes, "After reviewing the mercies of God toward him, David found hope in his people's covenant relationship with the Lord, though they were sinful and frail. In this confidence the psalmist called on all creation to bless their Lord.[1]" In that regard it is interesting to note that David refers to the Lord's mercies on four occasions throughout this psalm.

The Lord's mercies are bookends in the verses quoted above. The words that David writes in verse 8 above are the words that the **Lord God** Himself spoke to Moses in **Exod. 34:6**. One from days gone by recognizes that in that verse and those following it which emphasize God's mercies, something is missing:

> But the words in Exodus, "He will by not means clear the guilty" are omitted, for the time of His displeasure is gone, the little wrath (Isa. 54:7-8) is past, mercy has visited them and full of joyful worship they exalt His merciful dealing with them. And we too, dear reader, washed in that most precious blood, can join in and say, as redeemed Israel will yet say, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities."[2]

Another writer from long ago notices the extent of the Lord's mercy to those who are His:

> Boundless in extent toward his chosen is the mercy of the Lord. It is no more to be measured than the height of heaven or the heaven of heavens. *Like the height of the heaven* is the original language, which implies other points of comparison besides extent, and suggests sublimity, grandeur, and glory, As the lofty heavens canopy the earth, water it with dews and rains, enlighten it with sun, moon, and stars, and look down upon it with unceasing watchfulness, even so the Lord's mercy from above covers all his chosen , enriches then, embraces them, and stands for ever as their dwelling-place. Who can reach the first of the fixed stars, and who can measure the utmost bounds of the starry universe? Yet so great is his mercy. Oh, that great little word so![3] (Italics in the original.)

At that point David penned something that he knew was very true of himself (and us as well):

> **For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. (Ps. 103:14)**

That may well be the reason that we experience God's **mercy (and grace**) today, for He walked in our sandals and experienced our **weaknesses:**

> **For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, *that we may obtain mercy* and find grace to help in time of need. (Heb. 4:15, 16)**

Take time to read that marvelous psalm—Psalm 103. Then consider whether you **have come boldly to the throne of grace and mercy to obtain mercy** in your **time of need**. **Bless** and thank **the Lord** with **all** of your being for providing easy access to His **mercy.** It's **all** available because of your **Lord** and Savior Jesus Christ and His finished work. Praise Him, **bless** Him, worship Him today. Maranatha!

---

[1] Allen P. Ross, "Psalms," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 867.

[2] Arno C. Gaebelein, *The Book of Psalms* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeau Brothers, 1965), 380.

[3] Charles H. Spurgeon, Norman Hillyer, ed., *Great Verses from the Psalms,* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1977), 199.