

Now is the time to give back the Blessing!

By

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Text: Ps 103:1-5

A one-way traffic of praise

The roles are pretty well demarcated: Deity is to receive praise and devotion from the worshipper, and the worshipper is to receive blessing and favour from Deity. This evening, however, it's a one-way traffic! Let heaven have all the blessing. Make no more pleas; make no further requests, and we'll receive more than we ever imagined possible. For as the Lord Jesus reportedly said, "It's more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

So let what the good Lord has already done for us be enough for us. Let's adopt an attitude of gratitude towards Him, and He'll manifest Himself in our midst in His majesty enthroned on our praises—praises from our grateful hearts and lips to the holy One of Israel:

"But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel" (Ps 22:3).

The time of His unstinting praise has come, because He is worthy of it. Let's hold nothing back; keep back no feeling of gratitude and joy (in Him). Let all your being burst forth in His praise, even as the Psalmist exemplifies:

"Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.

"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:" (Ps 103:1-2).

It's a festival of praise, a praise offering, with all our being participating in the act; it's not a half-hearted but a whole-hearted offering of praise to Yah!

'Bless the LORD O my soul, and let every fibre of my being bless His holy name'.

That is to say, let my conscious and unconscious parts bless His holy name!

The words of David are a profound acknowledgement of the centrality of God in our lives. Without Him we are not! But praise Him. We are "fearfully and wonderfully made by Him ... and that my soul knoweth right well" (Ps 139:14).

So then, let every intricate part of our being give God His due: our soul, spirit, blood, body, sinew, vein, brain and lips! Let our spirits soar in His praise with every cell of ours behind and involved in it!

But how do we reach this place of unreserved generous offering of praise?

When we are minded to “forget” none of “His benefits” —His benevolent acts towards us. The Psalmist highlights some of these “benefits”:

1. “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities” (v. 3a). This is the forgiveness of sin He grants us through faith in His Son (1 John 1:9; 2:12). This cancels at a stroke all the curses and painful outcomes of sin. Thank God for His abundant mercy (Eph. 2:4). “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. ² Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile” (Ps 32:1-2). So you are on the path of blessing away from curse, and you didn’t deserve it. You deserved punishment, even death. But He forgave you by His grace. That is certainly a great blessing to be thankful for.
2. “Who healeth all thy diseases” (v. 3b). A direct resultant benefit of forgiven sins is healing. By His stripes we were healed by the same Saviour who paid the penalty for our sins (1 Pet. 2:24). In this church of the redeemed, His stripes are our medical insurance policy! He’s our healer not just in name—as a mere buzzword but in deed. Many of us don’t know our way around hospital wards; neither are we acquainted with medical specialists because His healing stripes are all sufficient!
3. “Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies” (v. 4). He continuously redeems our life from the destructive snares of the enemy, be they temptations or spiritual attacks. He alone redeems from evil (Gen. 48:16), and He has made us the objects of His redemptive love: “Blessed be the LORD, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. ⁷ Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped” (Ps 124:6-7). Instead of destruction, He has crowned us with “loving-kindness and tender mercies”—a glorious crown reserved for only the righteous: “His mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation” (Luke 1:50).
4. “Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's” (v. 5). He “satisfies” us, not that He loads us with all the creature comforts of the world which represent for carnal men the good life. But He sweetens our life; He gives us *contentment* because we know Him. It’s a satisfied life found only in Him—a by-product of the godly life: “But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸ And having food and raiment let us be therewith content” (1 Tim. 6:6-8). No matter how

cold it feels out there or how tough the going gets, He gives us a reason for life and for joy in Him. But that does not mean we literally 'subsist on faith'. He responds to our faith with concrete acts of care and kindness. *He satisfies our mouth with good things.* He sees to our bread and butter issues, ensuring we never go naked or sleep on an empty stomach or go scrounging from friends. And He blesses us to be satisfied with the blessings of His hands. We are not left feeling empty or unfulfilled or unsatisfied. He blesses us with contentment, inner joy, which permeates our whole life. "So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's". The eagle maker is creating a new breed of eagles—out of those who wait upon Him. And their strength will never fail: "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: ³¹ But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isa. 40:30-31). This is unique to the believer. Others may have strength, but they are not assured of renewal of strength. That's why they fall by the wayside panting after they have used up their strength. But Christ is both our strength and our inexhaustible reservoir of strength. And we keep going and going in His strength: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). The potential for accomplishment and excellence is unimaginable!

Aren't all these privileges and gifts a reason to bless the Maker of heaven and earth from the depth of your soul? A reason to put your whole being in worshipful mood?

That's my call today. And the call of your Saviour and my Saviour:

"And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment" (Mark 12:29-30).

He is worthy of it. Celebrate Him! Halleluiah!