



Sermon Growth Guide

May 30, 2021

What David Knew - Faithful Redeemer

Psalm 103

Key Verse: Psalm 103:4 “...who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion...”

Big Idea: God is our faithful redeemer, paying our debt and crowning us with His love.

Foundations

It's Memorial Day weekend, when we remember those who have died so that we can enjoy the levels of freedom we enjoy in America today. When a life is laid down on the battlefield, the people of that nation are “redeemed” in some sense—in the best sense, they are given more life and freedom through the payment of another.

But what about the places in our hearts that are not as they should be? Can the darkness in our own hearts be redeemed? David knew that God is Redeemer.

When we think rightly about God being Redeemer, we must make important distinctions between any mere human equivalent. God's redemption of our hearts is perfect in quality and eternal in direction. When God redeems you, He redeems all of you fully for all time, and not just future time, but your past and present as well. Whatever you've done, in Christ Jesus you are redeemed! Will you trust God in your redemption? Will you strive to live your life in gratitude of that redemption?

Begin your time together in prayer, rejoicing together that you have a Redeemer, a living Redeemer who is loving and active in your life! Ask God's Spirit to guide and guard your time together, to grow you even more into the likeness of Christ.

Understanding God's Word

What is the believer instructed to do in verses one and two?

How is God described in verses three to five?

What do we learn about the character of God in verses six, eight and 10?

Applying God's Word

God is our faithful Redeemer, paying our debt and crowning us with His love. Spend time together considering how you live into this good news. Do you know that God is your Redeemer? Do you live like it's true? Do you know that you're crowned with the very love and compassion of God? Would other people affirm that they know that you walk as a person crowned with the love and compassion of heaven?

Witnessing God's Word

God is our Redeemer. Our rejection of God is paid for by Christ on the cross. Even more, God gives us a crown of love and compassion. Psalm 103:4 says that God “redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion...” This is good news! How can you share this good news with someone near you who has yet to hear that their Redeemer lives?

No matter where you are, there is a Psalm to reach you and lead you back home to God.

One of the privileges of a pastor is sitting with people in their final days. I have had a lot of precious conversations with people looking back over their lives. I have heard a lot of things, prayed through some confessions, talked unfinished business, and dreamed about heaven. One thing I have never heard sitting with someone toward the end of life is this, “Pastor Tim, when all those people gather up to remember my life, just tell them: I nailed it. I hit it right out of the park. I never made a mistake in my whole life. I started out good, had a great run, and stuck the landing! Nailed it.” I haven’t had that one yet. No. We all have a few things we would like to redo. When you’re working on a big writing project, you save it in versions, you know? We all have stuff we wish we could go back to that earlier version and start over. Five years back. Ten. Maybe the whole parenting season. Maybe a relationship. We wish we could go back and do it over, and maybe set it right.

Today we wrap up this series, ***What David Knew***, finding Jesus in the Psalms of David, and I think we are at the end of David’s life now in Psalm 103. We rarely know for sure

when David wrote each Psalm, but this feels like we are in the mature years, looking pretty closely at summing up his life. David is face to face with his own mortality here. “As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. The life of mortals is like grass, they flourish like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more” (Psalms 103:13–16). We are blessed with a certain number of days, friends, and none of us knows that number. If there is one thing we have learned this past year, we are mortal. The whole world has been forced to stare its mortality in the eye, face to face. We can’t pretend we’re invincible anymore. David is summing things up here, and what he sees, what he knows he needs, and what the Spirit reveals to him, is that God is a faithful redeemer, “who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion” (Psalms 103:4). David knew God is a faithful redeemer.

What is a redeemer? You redeem a gift card. Where do we use this word? The word “redeem” comes from the



language of the marketplace. It means to purchase, to validate or to restore the value of something. If God is a redeemer, if God “redeems your life from the pit,” that means in some way that God makes a purchase, God pays a price to take a claim on your life, God buys something. This says God buys your life out of the pit. When you look back on your life—or really in any season, but I think as we get older we do look back on our lives and recognize we need a redeemer who can buy a few things back and make a few things right in our own past.

Tomorrow is Memorial Day. Pools open. Golf clubs come out. Grills get fresh gas. Me too! That’s what’s going on in my life! But it really is a day to remember. We remember those who gave their lives for our freedom. As they say, “All gave some; some gave all.” It’s the “some gave all” part we remember. In a city like ours, where one out of five people are either in the military or part of a military family, a lot of us don’t just think of Memorial Day in the abstract. We can picture names, faces, friends and family members. We remember, and sometimes we quote that famous verse from John: “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life

for one’s friends.” (John 15:13) I think about a Soldier giving his or her life to save others. If I did that, imagine I’m a Soldier or I’m a Police Officer or Firefighter, and I rush toward danger to save your life, and I’m killed. If I did that for you, I would be a hero, but not a redeemer. I would, by my death, purchase for you the remainder of your life, your future mortal life, however much longer that is. Twenty, thirty, forty years. But what this Scripture talks about is something much more. What David longed for was something more. Who can redeem not only my future, but my past? Who can redeem my past, present and future? Who can redeem my life from the pit of death and keep my life past mortal death into eternal life? Is there such a Redeemer?

“Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name” (Psalms 103:1). From my inmost being, from the very root of who I am, from my very soul, praise His holy name. What is God’s holy name? It isn’t a surname. Do you know when Moses saw a burning bush, and the fire didn’t consume it? Moses walked toward it and found himself speaking with God. God told Moses it was time to rescue the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Moses asked



God, “What name should I give them? Who shall I say sent me? Is there a name I should use?” “God said to Moses, ‘I AM who I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you’” (Exodus 3:14). I AM. It’s where we get the name YHWH. But it’s not a name like we think of it. It’s a description of God’s action, that God is for us. “Therefore, say to the Israelites: ‘I AM the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment’” (Exodus 6:6). There’s that word again. Redeem. God says, “I will redeem you. I will do it. I will redeem you myself with my own outstretched arm. That’s who I am. That’s my name.”

Redeemers show up again and again in the Old Testament. It was a known thing in the ancient world. Sometimes you needed a redeemer. It was called a “kinsman redeemer,” a distant family member who showed up to help. Imagine, no safety net back then. If your house burned down, or your business failed, or you spent all your money on doctors, or whatever, there was no welfare system, no insurance payout. You were stuck! Unless a

kinsman redeemer came along. If you were family, you had a cultural and moral obligation to come help. If someone wound up in debtors’ prison, people would go looking for their kinsman redeemer, the distant relative who would come, pay the price and set them free. That’s a redeemer, one who pays your ransom and sets you free. God says, “I will redeem you. I will be your redeemer. I will pay the price and set you free. That’s my name.” Praise His holy name.

So, to honor and praise the name of God, the character of God, is by definition to remember what He has done and trust what He will do. “Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits” (Psalms 103:2). And now we get a list, don’t we? A catalogue of blessings. “Who forgives all your sins.” David knew, forgiveness of sins was not a once and done thing. He needed forgiveness again and again and again. I can relate. “Who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases” (Psalms 103:3). God heals. Sometimes the healing comes before our mortal life is over. Sometimes it comes after. “Who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion” (Psalms 103:4). God redeems your life; He



purchases your life. He redeems it from the pit! The pit is the pit of death, the pit of Sheol, the pit of hell. If God buys your life back from the pit, that means the pit has some ownership claim on your life, right? God buys it back with a price. But then, God doesn't just leave things even. Let's say you owe a debt to your landlord, God comes along and pays it for you. Now it's at zero. No debt. God doesn't leave it there, He "crowns you." He puts a crown on your head. A crown of love. Not just any love, but God's characteristic love, faithful love, eternal love, unshakable love. He crowns your head with it. "Wear this." And with compassion. Long-suffering mercy. Understanding. Grace.

That's not all, either. "Who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's" (Psalms 103:5). How many unnatural desires, disordered desires, useless desires, burn through your life? There are desires we have...like a friend of mine said recently, trying to satisfy that desire is like stuffing fistfuls of salt in your mouth when you are dying of thirst. Useless desires. God actually satisfies our desires with good things. "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life"

(Proverbs 13:12). God changes what you want. He puts His Holy Spirit inside you to alter your desires, and then He fulfills them with good things. Well, it goes on. "The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed" (Psalms 103:6). David remembers the benefits, the graces, of God. As he looks back on his life, he can see the footprints, he can see the marks of God's grace all along the way. But most critical is the forgiveness. "He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" (Psalms 103:10,12). God forgives our sins. He is a faithful redeemer.

How does He do that? John Stott wrote about the way God brings the redemption we need. Personal redemption. "Because our evil is so deeply entrenched within us, self-salvation is impossible. So our most urgent need is redemption, that is to say, a new beginning in life which offers us both a cleansing from the pollution of sin and a new heart, even a new creation, with new perspectives, new ambitions and new powers." We need redemption, to have our lives purchased back from the pit of destruction and despair. Stott goes on, "And because



we were made in God's image, such redemption is possible. No human being is irredeemable. For God came after us in Jesus Christ, and pursued us even to the desolate agony of the cross, where he took our place, bore our sin and died our death, in order that we might be forgiven. Then he rose, ascended and sent the Holy Spirit, who is able to enter our personality and change us from within. If there is any better news for the human race than this, I for one have never heard it." God says, "I will redeem you, save you, purchase you back, with my own outstretched arm." The arm comes in Jesus, our faithful redeemer.

What did David know? David knew, beyond all human capacity for knowing, if we go back over it all, David knew God is Shepherd, God is Creator, God is Justice Maker, God is Guide, God is Forgiver, God is Savior, God is Faithful Redeemer. What David knew, beyond all natural human capacity for knowing, is that God is all these things—all the things we find in Jesus. "Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits" (Psalms 103:2). He forgives my sins. How does He do that? Jesus becomes sin for you so that you can become righteousness in Him.

He heals my sickness. Jesus becomes disease, He takes on the toxic poison, so that you can be whole and well. He works justice for the oppressed. Jesus becomes the oppressed, so you can know justice. That's how he redeems. That's how the purchase is made. That's how the price is paid. Do you see? That's how God reaches out His own arm to be your faithful redeemer. "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect" (1 Peter 1:18-19).

And he doesn't just redeem the rest of your life, like a hero who dies for you in battle. The Lord, the faithful redeemer, he redeems, restores, and renews your whole life. Only Jesus can redeem not only your remaining years, but your past as well. Jesus can redeem your past. The story changes in His hands. The purchase is made, the redemption comes in Jesus, and he redeems your life. Your past. Your present. Your future life and past death your life into eternal life. God is, in Christ, your faithful redeemer. That's what David knew.

