**Where am I, in Psalm 103?**

**INTRODUCTION**
--“The Mt. Everest of the psalms.”
--You are in this very personal psalm.
--“Bless” means praise, acknowledging God as the source of all blessings.

**VERSE 1**
Psalm 103 is not a prayer. David is talking to himself.

“All within me” doesn’t mean self-scrutiny and perfect sincerity

God made your inmost being and knows it perfectly (Psalm 139).

God desires a relationship of love: received and given, to and from your inmost being.

**VERSES 2**
Here’s how he does it: His benefits.

“Forgives all your iniquity”
--Not because you thoroughly repented and lived well
--Not because He looked ahead and saw your decision
--BECAUSE “He chose us in Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight” (Eph 1:4). Col 1:22 adds “and free from accusations.”

**VERSE 3**
“Heals all your diseases.” The order is key:
“Sickness of body and soul came into the world by sin, and as sin is eradicated, bodily, mental and spiritual diseases will vanish” (Van Gemeren).

Jesus demonstrated the order of Psalm 103: Forgiveness of sins is the basis of healing. “But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic— “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” (Mark 2:10-11)

**VERSES 4-5**
“Redeems your life from the pit.”
-- Hell, eternal punishment (a hard doctrine, but it’s biblical).
--the Resurrection. “Pit” is the grave. Jesus didn’t stay in the grave. You won’t, either.
--“the pit” as a metaphor. David has used it before (see Psalm 40:1-2). Enemies, entanglements, troubles, etc.
“Crowns you with steadfast love and mercy.” He has exalted you to a royal position! Your identity, in Christ, is royalty.

“All these benefits give you hope, renewal, freedom.

VERSES 6-18
David goes from talking to/about himself, to “we/us,” addressing the covenant people of God.

VERSE 6
David reminds Israel of all those great things God has done to rescue a people for Himself (the Red Sea etc). These great “rescues” anticipated THE great rescue: Jesus.

VERSE 7
Parallelism emphasizes all that God revealed (“ways to Moses, acts to Israel”). Moses asked for this: “Now therefore, if I have found favor in Your sight, please show me now Your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor in Your sight. Consider too that this nation is Your people” (Exodus 33:13).

God has revealed even more to us: Jesus has came! And we have the apostles’ teaching. We get the privilege of a NT perspective on Psalm 103!

VERSES 9-12
Greatest possible way to express His love, forgiveness and removal of our guilt: impossible measurements.

“On those who fear Him.” Fear says, I can’t stay exposed to His holy justice. Fear runs to the refuge. Fearing Him means knowing, without Christ, you would perish.

VERSE 8-9
Merciful, gracious, doesn’t “accuse” you forever…these are what the LORD Himself revealed to His chosen people (see Exodus 34:6).

VERSES 13-16
Your very frailty provokes His compassion. It’s a Genesis reference: you are creaturely, and you are dying. HE KNOWS. And He’s destined you for resurrection, glory. You are wearing the “crown of compassion” right now.

VERSE 17-18
God doesn’t love meaningless dust. He loves you from that foundation of the world, till forever. He couldn’t state it more emphatically: “steadfast” and “everlasting to everlasting”—a wonderful redundancy!
VERSE 19-22
David the musician is making a great crescendo. Who is this who loves you everlastingly? Who is this that gave you royal status? The LORD who rules over all. The one who said, after His resurrection, ‘All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me’ (Matt 28:18).

David tells EVERYTHING to praise the LORD. From angels to “ALL his works, in ALL places of His dominion.” Another wonderful redundancy!

Psalm begins as it ends: with David/you/me personally. Loved and known intimately, you are part of the grand plan.

FOR DISCUSSION
When you feel weak, how can Psalm 103 (ie, characteristics of God) encourage you?

How can knowing that your life is part of something bigger (vv 19-22) affect how you see yourself today/how you live today?

Read Mark 2:1-12. Discuss the relationship between Jesus “authority on earth to forgive” and His healing of diseases. What was He teaching the crowd? The man? The Pharisees? You?

Resources used: