

Sermon 8-30-17 It's a wonderful life Psalm 103

Dear Living Saints:

Is life worth it?

Remember the movie "It's a Wonderful Life"?

On Christmas Eve 1945 in Bedford Falls, New York, George Bailey is contemplating suicide.

- George (Jimmy Stewart) runs the family business the Bailey Building and Loan
- As the town is preparing to welcome home George's brother who was a war hero George's uncle misplaces \$8000 of the Building and Loan's deposits. (\$100,000 today)
- They bank examiner arrives to look over the books and George knows he is in trouble because he can't find the \$8000
- George decides he's worth more dead than alive and is on a bridge contemplating jumping into the icy waters of the river
- Clarence, an angel, is sent to save him and show George what life would have been like in Bedford Falls if he had never lived.
- George is given the opportunity to see his town as if he had never lived which meant his own mother and wife did not know him.
- George then calls out and cries "I want to live" and the real world comes back into existence and George finally realizes he did have a "Wonderful Life" despite his trials.

"There is nothing the soul of man is so prone to forget as to render thanks that are due God."

King David wrote Psalm 103.

- He excites his own soul to praise God
- Despite the struggles and boredom of life
- Life is worth living
- We are encouraged to praise God

It's a wonderful life!

I. Because we have a great God vv1, 8, 14, 17

Praise His Holy Name

A. Whose name is holy "Praise His Holy Name" v1

1. The 2nd petition of the Lord's Prayer and the 2nd commandment says

"Hallowed Be Thy Name"

Luther says that God's Name is holy in and of itself. Yet, in our daily lives we keep God's name holy by...

- Teaching God's Word faithfully
- Living out God's Word faithfully

We are not to take the Name of the Lord in vain by....

- Forgetting to praise Him
- By misusing His name

2. His name represents everything about Him

God's name describes Him. God's name teaches us that our God is...

- Faithful, eternal, all-knowing, all-powerful and good
- Holy, patient, loving, present-everywhere, unchanging and wise

When we understand who God is and that He is in control of all things....we submit to Him who is in control of all things....

- Our circumstances
- Our challenges
- Our good times
- Our not so good times

Sir Isaac Newton the great scientist of the 1600's would never pronounce the Name of God without first lifting his hat out of honor for the Lord.

We have a great God....

Lord is compassionate and gracious

B. Who is good to us v8 "Lord is compassionate and gracious"

1. with His patience - "He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." II Peter 3:9

God would have every right to punish us on the spot for our sins. But He doesn't. We are still here and alive under His grace. He gives time to repent. Psalm 103:10 "Does not treat us as our sins deserve"

2. with His love - "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Psalm 103:12

C. Who knows us v14 "He knows how we are formed..."

He knows how we are formed

1. Better than I know myself "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Mt 10

"God will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear...He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." I Corinthians 10:13

God knows how much heat we can take. He knows when to take the pressure off of us.

2. By indentifying with my struggles "He too shared in our humanity because He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted." Hebrews 2:14, 18

Jesus completely understands our struggles and weaknesses.

Jesus completely understands our fears and our pains

Jesus completely offers us forgiveness and strength

3. By defending us "Jesus always lives to intercede for us" Hebrews 7:25

This means Jesus is our Defense lawyer speaking to the Father on our behalf. This is an ongoing 365/24/7 intercession.

D. Who is eternal v17

1. Which transcends my frailty.

We are frail but God is merciful.

- His mercy is there when I am weak and sick and fall down
- His mercy instructs us with His Word
- His mercy comforts us
- His mercy picks us up

- His mercy forgives us

He knows my frailty. We are like the plants. Vv15-16 We are frail and temporary but we have this strong ground of comfort. There is an everlasting power which raises us above the transitory nature of this life.

2. Which provides my foundation “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear...the Lord Almighty is with us...Be still, and know that I am God.” Psalm 46

Life is Worth It!

II. Because we have great benefits vv2-6 “Forget not all His benefits”

“Forget not all His benefits”

- Forgiveness
- Recovery from illness and/or eternal life
- Deliverance from everlasting death
- Abundant loving-kindness
- Food and shelter and friends

A. Forgiveness of our sins vv3-4 “Crowns you with love”

1. Which is immediate - We don’t have to work for our forgiveness. We don’t have to wait for our forgiveness. It is given on the spot. Our sins have been paid for through the cross. Our sins are washed away and by faith we receive this forgiveness.

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Ro 5:1

2. Which is complete “He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” I John 1:9

God desires to forgive you. He has forgiven you. The next time you struggle with being forgiven because you think you are not good enough to be forgiven or you think you have out sinned God’s grace remember

I John 3:20 “God is greater than our hearts...He knows we belong to Him.”

3. Which is everlasting - “God will remain faithful, for He cannot disown Himself.” II Tim 2:13 Jesus will stay by your side. He won’t give up on you.

B. The renewal of strength v5 “Satisfies our desires - renewed like an eagle”

1. Which is daily “And my God will meet all your needs...” Philipians 4:19

“Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” Isaiah 40:31

An eagle lives a long time. An eagle is a symbol of strength and speed. A person blessed of God will grow weak and slow down less rapidly.

“God will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast” Isaiah 26:3

2. Which is sufficient “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” II Cor 12:9

V6 “The Lord works righteousness in us” We rely on His strength and mercy not our talent, energy or effort.

3. Which is good --- “Taste and See that the Lord is Good”

What type of food do you like?

- The Word of God is sweeter than honey
- The Word of God gives strength to our soul

C. The restoration of life v6 “Works righteousness and justice for us”

“Works righteousness and justice for us”

1. Which is revealed to us “But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” I John 3:2

“We shall be like Him”

- Like Jesus after His resurrection – we will have a glorified physical body
- We will be able to eat and touch
- Jesus said to Thomas: “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side.”

2. Which is promised to us - “But God will redeem my life from the grave; He will surely take me to Himself.” Ps 49:15

Life is Worth It!

III. Because we have a great future vv19-22

A. For God is in control v19 “He rules over all”

1. David’s experience with Goliath - The battle is the Lord’s.

2. “Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” Josh 1:9

3. “Look to the Lord and His strength. Seek His face always.” I Chron 16:11

B. For God will fulfill His promises v17 “Love is with us”

“Do not let your hearts be troubled...Trust in God....I will take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.” Jn 14:1ff

“He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die.” Jn 11:25

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jer 29:11ff

C. For we are in fellowship with God vv20-22 “We are servants”

“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!” I John 3:1

This is what we are!

- Our self-worth is found in our Heavenly Father
- “Do not be afraid or discouraged for the Lord God is with you.” I Chron 28
- “Have faith in the Lord your God and you will be upheld.” II Chron 20

Life with the Lord is worth living!

- Praise Him
- Thank Him
- Live for and with Him

“But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord’s love is with those who fear Him...with those who keep His covenant and remember to obey His precepts.” Vv17f