



8/27/25

I'm reading a book called Absolute Surrender by my favorite author, Andrew Murray. I just read a chapter about Peter, how he was so devoted to Jesus, and yet because of his pride and devotion to self, he also denied Jesus... and it broke his heart... But then he surrendered everything to Jesus, and he was completely changed. Andrew Murray made this point... We must deny self or we will deny Christ. We cannot have both. I pray that you and I will see how wonderful it is to let go of SELF so that we can cling to JESUS. I don't want to just acknowledge my need to deny self, but I pray that by the power of the Holy Spirit in me, I will intentionally deny self... and not deny Jesus. O Lord, may it be so!

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Psalm 103:1-12

This psalm begins and ends with one statement, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." And in between, it gives me so many reasons to bless Him... to kneel before Him in adoration. To kneel before Him is to bow before Him in humility because I see something in Him that is greater than myself. His very personal name, Yahweh, is greater than me or anyone... angel or human. He is the only one named Yahweh... and He is the only one who deserves my absolute surrender. Why?

Vs. 1 ~ His name is holy... In the Hebrew culture, a person's name represents his character and his reputation. God's very character is holy. He is known for His holiness... His set apartness. Without His holiness, all His other attributes would be tainted. But He is pure. No one in all creation matches the holiness of God... O my soul, bless Him for His holiness.

Vs. 2 ~ He treats me with all kinds of benefits, of rewards... that I don't deserve! Bless the Lord, O my soul, for His benefits.

What are those benefits?

Vs. 3-12 ~

He forgives me...

Vs. 3 ~ He forgives ALL my iniquity. Some people say they can't forgive because the offender was so wrong. But who else needs to be forgiven than the one who does wrong? Forgiveness costs the person who forgives. Forgiveness for me cost Jesus His life.

Vs. 4 ~ He redeemed my life FROM THE PIT. I was in the pit! Because of His mercy and forgiveness, He paid my debt to get me out. I could not climb out of that pit. I would have died there.

Vs. 4 ~ He crowns me with mercy... compassion. He does not place shame on my head. He places His tender mercy on me as a crown.

Vs. 8 ~ He's merciful... compassionate toward me, a sinner from the pit.

Vs. 10 ~ He doesn't deal with me according to my sins or repay me according to my iniquities. How often have I thought or heard from someone else, "I am going through this struggle because the Lord is punishing me"? The answer is always NO He's not. If the Lord were to punish me for my sins, the cross of Christ would mean nothing. He disciplines me in love, but that's different. Punishment is about condemnation. Discipline is about sanctification... to help me share in His holiness and the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

Vs. 12 ~ He's removed my transgressions as far as the east is from the west. All the ways I've rebelled Him are gone. He took them away. He keeps no record of them!!!

If I take a trip to Hawaii and leave my shoes behind... and someone says, "Where are your shoes?" My answer is, "I don't have them with me, but I have them." They'll say, "No. you HAD them, but you don't have them anymore." I need to stop acting like I have what has been removed and be grateful that God has given me new shoes... the shoes fit with the readiness given by the gospel of peace! He removed my shoes that ran FROM Him and gave me shoes that run TO Him. And He keeps no record of all my rebellious running.

Bless the Lord, O my soul for His compassionate, tender mercy and forgiveness.

Vs. 4 ~ This benefit is a category unto itself ~ He heals all my diseases. ALL my diseases. My most horrible disease is the disease of sin. He doesn't just take it away... He cleanses me from all unrighteousness.

Now... if this meant that He heals me of every physical disease this side of heaven, no one would ever die. God is an eternal God, and in all things, He speaks from an eternal perspective. If this is hard for me to grasp, it's probably because I think too much of me my finite perspective. He does not bow to me. I bow to Him. But wow... what a wonderful hope! He heals my horrible disease of sin AND He heals every physical struggle when He takes me home to Him. I will not carry any disease into heaven. Truly, I need ALL His benefits to be eternal, or they mean nothing.

He loves me...

Vs. 4 ~ He crowns me with His Chesed, His covenant loyalty love. A covenant cannot be broken. It takes sacrifice. He made the sacrifice so that I could know His love personally, eternally. The invisible crown I wear on my head at all times is His love and His mercy.

Vs. 8 ~ He's abounding in steadfast love... it can't be measured. He is not just loving, He IS love. That is His very being.

Vs. 11 ~ His love is as high and great as the heavens toward those who fear Him. Who is the one who fears the Lord? The one who blesses Him, bows to Him in awe, acknowledges who He is. To fear Him is to worship Him, to trust Him.

I know from John 3:16 that He loves the whole world, but only those who believe that He is who He says He is will experience the FULLNESS of His love. Only those who understand that we have nothing apart from Him and were dying in a pit without Him will experience the greatness of His love... because we have to give up self to do it... and a lot of people don't want to give up self. It is not His cruelty that denies us. It is our cruelty that denies Him. And yet He still died for the whole world.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, for His amazing, steadfast love.

He is gracious, giving us favor that we don't deserve...

Vs. 5 ~ Though I don't deserve it, He satisfies me with good and renews me as an old eagle is renewed to be young again. I've read that when eagles get old, they go up to a high mountain and lose all their feathers. When the new feathers grow, they are renewed like a young eagle. God has taken the old from me and made me a new creation in Christ.

Vs. 7 ~ As God graciously made Himself and His works known to Moses and the Israelites when He delivered them out of slavery and brought them to the Promised Land, He makes Himself known to me... but even more! He has placed His Spirit in me who reveals Himself to me in ways I could never have understood without His grace.

Vs. 8 ~ Because of His mercy, love, and grace, He's slow to anger. He doesn't get angry easily. How often have I treated Him as though He's quick to anger and slow to love... and still, He's not angry with me.

Vs. 9 ~ He will not always chide. He's not contending with me or accusing me as I so often accuse Him of doing!!! He says I have peace with Him through my faith in Jesus (Romans 5:1). How much would my life be different if I would take that to heart!!!

Vs. 9 ~ He will not keep His anger forever... He is slow to anger and He does not stay angry. Ecclesiastes 7:9 says, "Anger lodges in the heart of fools." God is not a fool. I, on the other hand, can be a fool. O Lord, please dislodge the anger from my heart!

Bless the Lord, O my soul, for His grace!

These are just SOME of the Lord's benefits. O Lord, so many reasons to bless You. Psalm 34:1 says, "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth." If I just keep my mind dwelling on all Your benefits, praising will never be a chore... it will be the natural outflow of my heart because of who You are. O Lord, please help me to keep my heart and mind set on You. You will take care of the rest. Praise Your HOLY name.