

When Your Praise Lacks Passion – Ps 103

Little survey for you – 3 questions

1. If you were to rate the *passion* of your praise this morning, on a scale of 1 to 10 what would it be? (Go ahead, write down a number)
2. If the person next to you were to rate the passion of your praise, what would it be? Don't give me the – “not all my passion shows itself outwardly” thing – granted But there's something very passionless about this . . . (drooping shoulders, etc) That's how some of you worship – your worship not just passionless, it's non-existent
3. If God were to rate the passion of your praise this morning, what would it be?

Is your praise filled with passion these days? Or is it noticeably lacking?

Sometimes our praise lacks passion because . . .

We just feel blah, stale – that happens from time to time

Circumstances of life distract us or get us down

Tired or depleted spiritually – you've given/given/given of yourself for the benefit of others, and you have little or nothing left for God

But I think most often, we *want* to praise God with passion, but we've lost our *awe* of him

He's no longer wonderful, beautiful, and amazing to us

We've become a little numb to God, if we were ever sensitive in the first place

Since praise is the natural response of awe – you've lost your praise as well

If you ever had it in the first place

Some of you don't even know what you're missing, because you've never *praised* with any passion

Fortunately, Ps 103 addresses this very issue

Originally written as hymn for praise in King David's day (1kBC) . . .

It remains as fresh and applicable as ever, as a pattern for our praise, especially when it lacks passion (turn there)

Read v1-7 – these first verses are both an expression of praise, and a reminder to do so

That's the first course of action when your praise lacks passion . . .

Remember God's work of grace (v1-7)

As in *forget not all his benefits* (2)

- But he starts with an expression of praise

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! (1)

Somebody mentioned to me this week that this is the prayer to pray after a meal when forgot to pray beforehand ☺

Bless is not a word we often use when referring to God

Normally, *bless* is used to express/confer good will or good things on others

That's how it's used the majority of the 327x in the OT

Like sometimes I'll say “God bless you” – as an open prayer/desire of mine that God would pour out his blessings on your life

But in this context, we're not conferring on God some blessing he doesn't have

Rather, we're acknowledging how good he already is; Attributing all good things to him

That, by definition, is an expression of *praise* – an affectionate, grateful acknowledgment of God's goodness

That's why some translations read “*praise* the Lord” – that's what it means in this context

That's all well and good

- But if the clutter of your life has pushed God's goodness to the back of the junk drawer

Your praise will lack passion

Or if you've forgotten what he's done – i.e. his works of grace in your life . . .

Your praise will lack passion

The obvious cure for which, is to remember – Remember God's work of grace in your life

As in – *forget not all his benefits* (2); As in – think about it

When your praise lacks passion, go back and remember God's work of grace

Whether it's his grace of forgiving all your sins (3a)

Or healing your sickness (3b)

Pulling you out of the pit of a miserable life and adorning you w/ his love and mercy (4)

Satisfying you with all things good and renewing your strength (5)

Delivering you from oppression and restoring justice in your life (6)

Whatever it is, if your praise lacks passion, the first step to restoring it and keeping it, is to remember God's work of grace in your life – remember, remember, remember

Take a look at that list in v3-6 – what is it that jumps out at you?

What work(s) of grace in your own life does that bring to mind?

When your praise lacks passion, this is the first course of action

Take a minute right now, just 10 seconds, and reflect on God's work of grace in your life

Things he did that he didn't have to do

The blessings he gave so that you could bless him – go ahead and do that (Jeopardy)

When your praise lacks passion – remember God's work of grace

Second, when your praise lacks passion . . .

Recall God's way of compassion (v8-14)

Read v8-14 and comment

8 – direct quote fr God, about himself, when spoke to Moses on Mt Sinai (Ex 34:6)

9 – chide – reprimand; legal word from courtroom arguments meaning that God won't always make a case against you

Anger – having every right to sustain his anger against us because of our sin, he doesn't; he lets it go

10 – sin, by definition, is rebellion against God; it's refusing to live his way

Apart from Christ, it would be entirely just for God to bring the full weight of punishment to bear every time we sin

But he doesn't – just like he tempers his anger and lets that go . . .

He restrains his justice as well – he doesn't give us what we deserve

11-12 – David leads us into the great expanse of creation to experience God's limitless love, and forgiveness that's final

Then brings us into the intimacy of a home to experience the warmth and compassion of our loving heavenly Father (13)

14 – God not only knows who you are, he knows *how* you are

He knows what you can handle physically and emotionally, and what you can't

He knows that some of you need to be knocked up side the head when you sin

And others just need a stern look

He knows that some of you need a pat on the back for encouragement, and others an hour-long hug

He knows how you were formed, inside and out
And the frailty of your existence compared to the might of his power
What's more, he knows and remembers you even when you forget him

When you put all that together – his mercy, grace, love, forgiveness, tenderness
It spells *compassion*
Compassion limited only by his limitless love
Constrained only by his unlimited capacity to forgive
Restricted only by his infinite mercy
In other words – compassion that has no limit at all
When your praise lacks passion – recall that

Recall those times of tender mercy – when you deserved to be punished but weren't
Those times when you expected his wrath but received his forgiveness
Those times of gentle nudging when you expected nothing at all
Recall those precious times of God's comfort when your world was falling apart
When your praise lacks passion – recall God's way of compassion

Ponder God's promise of love (v15-19)

David turns philosophical on us here for a moment, to ponder what people have been
pondering for thousands of years – our very existence
But instead of focusing on man like most people do, he focuses on God
Read 15-19

- See what he's doing in v15-16?
He's contrasting the everlasting love of the Lord with two things – the fading nature of man's life, and the momentary touch of the wind

One the one hand – man's *life*, though it flourishes for a time, fades like the flowers/grass
But God's *love* lasts forever – at least for those who fear him
Those who are so overwhelmed and awestruck by his power and holiness that they give their entire lives to praising him

On the other hand – while the wind is here one minute and gone the next
Not even mindful of the place it just passed or the thing it touched
God's love *remains* on those who fear him – forever; it never goes away

- Neither does his righteousness that he credits to our account (17b)
From everlasting to everlasting, the righteousness of the Lord is extended to children's children – i.e. throughout the generations of mankind
This is the OT way of describing justification – the act of God to declare us righteous, to credit righteousness to our account, on the basis of our faith

In David's day, that righteousness was credited on the basis of faith in *God* as shown by their obedience to the *Law*
In our day, on this side of the cross, it's credited to us on the basis of our faith in *Jesus* as shown by our *works*

Point is – there's nothing fading or momentary about the righteousness of God
Once given, once credited to your account, it's never taken away, just like his love

When your praise lacks passion – ponder *that*
Ponder the promise of God's everlasting love and righteousness
You mess up, it's still there; Time goes by, it's still there
Your life fades, it's still there; Hardship falls, it's still there
Though *your* life is fickle and temporary, God's promise of love isn't
When your praise lacks passion – ponder the promise of God's love

Join God's faithful throng (v20-22)

Read 20-22 – after reminding us of God's work of grace, recalling God's way of compassion, and pondering God's promise of love . . .
It's like David breaks out of his thoughts, looks around, and tells everybody he possibly can, including creation itself – to join with him in praising the Lord

*One of the best ways to add passion to your praise is to worship with others
From the heavenly host who do his bidding
To the work of his creation that declares his glory (Ps 19)
To the people of God around the world
To those sitting right next to you . . .
One of the best ways to add passion to your praise is to worship with others

You're never alone when you praise the Lord
There's *always* a faithful throng exalting him in worship
And nothing will fuel yours more, than joining theirs
Nothing will add passion to your praise, than joining God's faithful throng to do so

It's one of the reasons we come together every Sunday
It's one of the reasons God told us not to neglect coming together
So that we could join his faithful throng in praise

So instead of talking about it – let's just do it
We have a faithful throng right here, and couple of songs ready to go
So stand up – remember God's work of grace, recall his way of compassion, and ponder his promise of love . . .
And add some *passion* to your praise