

Psalm 103:1-12 (NIV84)

1 Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
2 Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits-
3 who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,
4 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,
5 who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
6 The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.
7 He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel:
8 The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.
9 He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever;
10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.
11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him;
12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

Flat-earthers, apparently they actually exist -- people who truly believe that the earth is flat. I'm not sure how they justify that in their minds, but if one took that view of the earth it would mean that there must be an edge somewhere. There must be a limit somewhere to how far one could go before you would fall off the edge of the earth. Which makes you wonder, where do those who fall off the edge go? And why don't we ever hear of it happening? One would think that with all our modern technology and satellite imagery, that someone, somewhere would have captured an image of the flat earth, if indeed the earth was flat.

But no, the earth is not flat and the way God's forgiveness is pictured in Scripture is proof of it. It says in Psalm 103:11, "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him."

The tallest mountain on earth and the tallest building on earth do not begin to approach the height and limit of our atmosphere. And beyond our atmosphere, the highest heavens -- the far reaches of our universe -- mankind will never see, let alone reach. And yet, as "high" as those "heavens" are above the earth, that is how far and away, in terms of greatness, God's love is for those who fear Him. But it gets better!

Our earth is separated by the north and south poles; it spins on an axis.

If you were to travel north, eventually you would reach the pole and then anywhere you go from there would be to the south. But not so if you travel east or west. If you had the means to do it, you could travel east or west forever. Our psalm says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has [God] removed our transgressions from us." Notice, it doesn't say: "as far as the north is from the south;" that would be measurable -- limited.

You and I, when we've been wronged by someone, it hurts. We might be willing to forgive, but we have a hard time forgetting. We have a hard time forgetting our own sins, let alone the sins of others. How many times in our lives haven't old painful memories of our own misdeeds come back to haunt us and make us cringe? But here is the wonderful truth: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has [God] removed our transgressions from us." When we, in

repentance and faith, take our sins to God and seek His forgiveness and mercy, God forgives us for the sake of the innocent blood of Christ Jesus that was shed for us on the cross. Our sins are paid for and our debt is completely expunged.

What is the distance from east to west? It is infinite. How great is God's love for us? It is infinite, and, therefore, so can be our peace and confidence in God's forgiveness.

At peace with you in Christ on this earthly sphere, Pastor Golm

April 28

My Father's Blessings

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases ... who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies. Psalm 103:2-4

How can I ever sufficiently thank my heavenly Father for all his kindnesses toward me? If I were to number his blessings, how could I ever find sufficient language to describe them? Surely, I too must say with the psalmist: "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name." Why? The psalmist answers this question in three relative clauses:

"Who forgiveth all thine iniquities." That is the greatest of his benefits toward me. Nothing in life is more important, more comforting, or more encouraging to me than to know that, for Jesus' sake, my Father in heaven has forgiven me, has eternally thrown all my sins behind his back and will never remember them again. I am his forgiven child for time and for eternity.

"Who healeth all thy diseases." He has given me a body that is "fearfully and wonderfully" made, he has given me health and strength, he has nursed me in sickness and sustained me in trials, so that today my hands are still able to do his will and my lips are still able to sing his praise.

"Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies." The story of my life from early childhood to this present moment is a constant record of his love. My Christian parents, my church, my school, yes, every influence bringing me to the Savior's fold - not one of these was the fruit of my endeavors. All were the gracious leadings of his love.

As I stand today at the present milestone in my life and look back over the path by which the Lord has brought me to this moment, surely I have every reason to exclaim:

When all Thy mercies, O my God, My thankful heart surveys, Transported with the view I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise!

Truly, the Christian life is one continuous doxology. Its theme: Praise God from whom all
blessings flow!