

JCI #174 July 2016
Just Checking In – Top of the List
Psalm 103

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Psalm 103:1-3a Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities...

In this wonderful Psalm, we are commanded to bless the Lord. That is, we are to express our gratitude, thankfulness, and appreciation to God.

This expression of gratitude is to be specific. Bless the LORD! Unlike the world, we who know Christ know He is the source of all our blessings. We don't "thank our lucky stars!" We don't consider ourselves "fortunate." We don't say "somebody must be looking out for me." We give thanks to the LORD, the One true and living God from Whom all blessings flow.

This expression of gratitude is to be sincere. All that is within me bless His holy name! We must beware that we don't offer insincere praise. Jesus rebuked His own generation as He said... "Isaiah correctly said of you, This people draws near to me with their mouths but their hearts are far from me." Our gratitude is to be full, (all) deep, (that is within me) and real.

This expression of gratitude is to be sweeping. Forget not all His benefits! This is all but impossible, yet essential. We are not to forget a single blessing that He blesses us with, since every single one come from Him. James 1:17 "**Every** good gift and **every** perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." To be grateful is to remember every single blessing God gives to us while recognizing we do not deserve a single one.

Now, having captured our attention with this call to clearly expressed, pervasive and sincere gratitude to God, the Psalmist begins to list some of these many benefits God gives to us. And

on the very top of the list is the blessing of forgiveness. Let's consider together some of the reasons this blessing tops the list for the grateful heart.

Forgiveness tops the list of blessings because it is the **most essential**.

Without this blessing, none of the other blessings matter. If we die unforgiven, we die in our sins and spend eternity in hell, separated from God forever. This blessing tops the list as most essential because without forgiveness, nothing else matters. Don't forget it!

Forgiveness tops the list of blessings because it is the **most personal**.

I need personal forgiveness because I am a sinner who sins against a personal, holy God. Every one of my sins is a sin against God. No one can enjoy this blessing for me. No one else can receive this blessing for me. It is the most personal of all blessings because it forgives and frees me personally from all my sins. Don't forget it!

Forgiveness tops the list of blessings because it is the **most pervasive**.

God forgives all my sins. And if He didn't forgive them all, He might as well as not have forgiven me any, since even one sin will send me to hell forever. Oh the wonder that God blesses us with the forgiveness of all our sins, past, present and future. They were all future when Christ took them on the cross, and they are all forgiven through Him. Don't forget it!

Forgiveness tops the list of blessings because it is the **most costly**.

God blessed Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. They were blessed with life, and it didn't require the cross. They were blessed with health, and that didn't require the cross. They were blessed with marriage, and that didn't require the cross. They were blessed with a perfect body, mind and the five senses, none of which required the cross. But once they sinned, the only way to be forgiven was through the cross. Blood had to be shed to satisfy eternal justice. The blessing of forgiveness tops the list because it is the most costly. It cost God the Father His only Son, and it cost the Son his life. Don't forget it.

Forgiveness tops the list of blessings because it is the **most productive**.

Think of it...

Once God blesses us with the forgiveness of all our sins, then comes joy.

Once God blesses us with the forgiveness of all our sins, then comes peace.

Once God blesses us with the forgiveness of all our sins, then comes hope.

Once God blesses us with the forgiveness of all our sins, then comes gratitude.

Once God blesses us with the forgiveness of all our sins, then comes power to forgive others.

Once God blesses us with the forgiveness of all our sins, then guilt is gone.

Once God blesses us with the forgiveness of all our sins, then shame is gone.

Once God blesses us with the forgiveness of all our sins, then fear is gone.

Forgiveness tops the list of blessings because it is the **most extensive**.

Not only has God forgiven all our sins, but the Psalm goes on to say in verse 12 that "He removes our transgressions from us as far as the east is from the west." God not only forgives, He removes those sins from us and puts them away from us at an eternal distance, never to be seen or reminded of them again. Oh the wonder of God's forgiving grace.

Let us bless the Lord with an unending song of gratitude and forget not a single one of His blessings. And above them all, let us be grateful from the depths of our sin-cleansed hearts that He has forgiven us all our sins forever through the cross.

Self-check

- 1) Stop right now and bless God from the depths of your soul for His forgiving you your sins.
- 2) Do you value forgiveness as a blessing above all blessings?
- 3) Which of the above observations on forgiveness most touched your heart. Why? Share it with someone.

For Further Study:

Forgiveness verses – select a few to memorize.

Mt 9:2 ...Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

Lu 7:47 ...to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

Lu 23:34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

Ro 4:7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

Eph 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Col 2:13 ¶ And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

Col 3:13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. {quarrel: or, complaint}

1Jo 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1Jo 2:12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

“Lord, You are the Author of every blessing, the source of every benefit, the fount of every good thing that comes to me. Forgive me for my lack of gratitude. Forgive me when I take so much for granted, as though all my blessings are somehow normal fare. Forgive me most for not appreciating the forgiveness You grant to me every moment of every day. Warm my heart and enable me to praise You with the depth, sincerity and wonder that You are more than worthy of. I pray in the Name of Him Who gave His all to give me the blessing of forgiveness, my crucified, risen Redeemer, Jesus Christ, Amen.”

Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you.

Living with leaving in view.... John 9:4

Ron& Val

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable,
changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible
with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows,
spending our time on eternity,
owning nothing yet possessing everything
that matters and lasts.
We are Pilgrims in Paradox.
Welcome to THE JOURNEY