



# VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

## Summer Playlist

### Remember, Part 2

### Psalm 103

Steve Lombardo | August 16, 2020



I want to take you back to the time of Moses. Do you remember Moses, the man called by God to deliver the nation of Israel from slavery in Egypt? This same Moses had a wooden staff that turned into a snake. This same Moses sparred with Pharaoh. This was the Moses through whom God brought the plagues on Egypt. You might remember the scene with Charlton Heston playing Moses when he parted the Red Sea so the nation of Israel could walk through on dry ground, after which the waves crashed down on Pharaoh's army.

It was less than three months after they crossed the Red Sea that the nation of Israel made it to Mt. Sinai. You can read about this in Exodus 33-34. Moses went up Mt. Sinai to meet with God. While he was up there receiving the Ten Commandments—the law of God—the nation of Israel rebelled. This was the first of many rebellions. The people thought Moses had been on the mountain too long. Maybe a bear got him or he died of old age. So they decided they needed a god they could see and touch. Aaron was the second in command, so they asked him, "Aaron, give us a god." So he fashioned a golden calf. Later on, when Moses questioned Aaron about what had happened, Aaron told him, "They brought all their gold to me, I threw it in the fire, and out came this calf." Well, we know it didn't just come out of nowhere. They demanded because they wanted a new god. They wanted to abandon the God Who had delivered them out of Egypt and Moses who had led them.

While Moses was still up on the mountain, God told him what was happening. Moses came down from the mountain furious at the people, so he broke the tablets God had given him. More importantly, God was angry and His wrath was kindled against the people. Moses however chose to intercede for the people, and God relented. Moses then punished the people by having them grind up the golden calf, put the ground up gold in the water and had them drink the water.

After that, Moses went back up the mountain to meet with God a second time and to receive the law once again. After they renewed the covenant God had made with the nation of Israel, Moses said to God in Exodus 33:18, "Please show me your glory." That seems an odd request.

Time out. I think that's a great thing to pray. In the coming days here at Village Bible Church, we're going to have a prayer initiative. Praying that God would show us His glory. "God, show this church Your glory. Show my neighbor Your glory. Show my sister in Christ Your glory." It is good to pray that God's Kingdom would come and His will would be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:7-13). "God, show us Your glory. We want to experience Your glory. We want to bask in Your presence. We want to do Your will." This is a great prayer.

When Moses asked God to show him His glory, listen to what God said to him in Exodus 33:19-23:

<sup>19</sup> And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The Lord.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. <sup>20</sup> But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live."<sup>21</sup> And the Lord said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, <sup>22</sup> and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. <sup>23</sup> Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen."

Now, does God have a face? Does God have a back? Does God have a hand? We know that "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). But this language is here to help us understand the relationship between God and Moses.

God said to him, "You can't see My face. You can't see the full weight of My glory. You can't stand before My face. I will pass before you and allow you to see My back."

That word for "back" in the Hebrew here and other places means "the place that is after" or "soon after" or "just following." It's the place where God once was. God said to him, "I'll pass beside you, putting you in the cleft of the rock." Moses hid in the cleft of the rock. Maybe you know the hymn, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee."

Jesus is the cleft of the rock. As we look back at the unfolding of salvation throughout history and see the Messiah, the Christ, He is the cleft of the rock. He is the One in Whom we hide. He is the One we can come to so that we might be able to stand before the very throne of God. Jesus Christ is the cleft of the rock. God told Moses, "I'll put you in the cleft of the rock, I'll pass by and then you can see the place where I once was."

God renewed the covenant He made with the nation of Israel on Mt. Sinai. The reason I bring this up is because in the Psalm we're looking at today—Psalm 103—David uses these words to remind us of the graciousness and goodness of this covenant-keeping God.

He says this in verses six and seven, "*The Lord works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel.*" So here's Moses and here's the nation of Israel. The Israelites who are reading this Psalm understand it. Verse eight: "*The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.*" These are the words God Himself spoke to Moses.

This is Part Two of our study of Psalm 103, which I'm calling "Remember." In Part One we talked about the five benefits we have when we come into relationship with God. It's okay to ask, "What's in it for me?" There are wonderful and amazing benefits for the people who choose to follow God, for those who trust in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. We looked at those benefits in Psalm 103:1-14.

Just as God renewed His covenant with Moses and the nation of Israel, He also renewed His covenant with David. In Psalm 89, David sings about the covenant God had with him as king over Israel. That covenant would come to fruition when God would raise up the Messiah from the kingly line of David. This means that in Christ, you and I are now connected through the new covenant to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of Moses, the God of David and the Maker of heaven and earth. By believing, we are now able to experience this steadfast love—this incredible covenant love—that God has for us.

I'm going to frame our study today with good news and some bad news. First, the bad news in Psalm 103:15-18. It's actually bad news, but let it hit you and sink in, because it makes the good news that much sweeter. It makes the steadfast love of the Lord even more amazing.

## **The Bad News – Verses 15-16**

Beginning in verse 15, we read, "*As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more.*" There are two parts to this bad news.

### **1. Everyone is going to die. Life is short!**

David is saying here in this song. "*As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field.*"

We used to have tulips. I remember how some years they would come up very early in the spring, or sometimes even in late February. Then we'd get nailed with some snow and ice, and those tulips which had made a promising start would just be gone. That's what we are being compared to.

As for man, as for woman, our days are like grass. We're like a flower of the field. Everyone is going to die. Life is short. Now, we all know we're going to die. We all know too that life is short. The longer we live, the years seem to be flying by faster and faster and faster. Our kids are growing up, they're leaving the house. The grandkids are arriving and then they're growing up. Then they're having kids...

We know that death is right around the corner for each of us, but we live in a kind of denial that it's actually going to happen to us, don't we? If you're one of the oldest people on the planet, you live with this part of this bad news on a daily basis. Maybe you're Kane Tanaka in Japan, the oldest living woman today. As of this sermon, she is 117 years, 223 days old. The oldest man is Saturnino de la Fuente, who lives in Spain who is 111 years and 186 days old. Now, if you're one of these two people and have one foot in the grave and the other on a banana peel, you understand this part of the bad news—life is short. But the reality is we are all kind of living like that. We're all kind of balancing on the banana peel. I'm sorry to have to tell you this, but it's true that you're going to be gone soon.

Aren't you glad you tuned in today? Aren't you glad you heard this? You're going to be gone. Life is short, like the grass or the flower of the field. This is bad news. But I'm telling you this because God's Word tells us this. In order for us to see how good the steadfast love of God is, we have to realize our reality. We have to remember that we are but dust.

If I weren't to tell you this, you'd be upset with me too. It would be as if I were giving you a ride in my car. I pick you up at your house, drive out of your neighborhood on a road you're familiar with, because you drive on it every day. There's a huge pothole in the road, but you don't say anything to me about it. We hit that pothole, it breaks the rims on the car's wheels and shakes the engine right out of the engine block. We're broken down on the side of the road.

"Why didn't you tell me this pothole was there? We're just down the road from your house? Didn't you know it was there?" You say, "Sure, I knew it was there, but we were having such a good conversation. The sun was shining; it was such a nice day out. I didn't want to be pessimistic. I didn't want to be a Debbie Downer, so I just didn't mention it." I would say, "What's your problem? You should have told me it was coming."

God does that with us. We will all face death soon. In the grand scheme of things, it's right around the corner. And when we die, we will face the judgment of God. Hebrews 9:27 says, *"It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment."* This is part of the reality of life. It will end. Life is short.

## **2. The world is going to forget you ever lived.**

Now, the second thing David says is not only that life is short, but that the world is going to forget you ever lived. Now I would say that's bad news, Verse 16 says, *"For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more."*

If you're at the top of your profession—we're talking about the top two in the whole world—you might be remembered for a while. You might be written about in the history books. If you invented the light bulb, or if, like Al Gore, you invented the internet, you will be remembered for a while, but that too is fleeting. That too will be stored in some library somewhere, shut, sealed off and forgotten. Even those people will be forgotten. The average person really will be forgotten quickly. Let me give you a test to see if it's true for you in your family.

Think about your mom and dad. You know who your mom and dad are? Good. How about Grandma and Grandpa? Do you know them? Your Papa and Nonie. Your Grandpop and Mimi, or whatever name you call them. You can probably think of them, and may even know them well. How about Great Grandma and Great Grandpa? Do you know them? I know my Great Grandma and Great Grandpa, not because I ever met them—I never did meet them—but because of pictures I've seen and the stories I've heard from family. So I know a little bit about them, but admittedly not much. I at least know the names of the great-grandparents on either side.

Now, about your great-great-grandparents? If we were in the same room together, I would ask you to raise your hand if you can remember your great-great-grandparents. There would be very few of you who would be able to tell me anything about them. I can barely tell you anything about my great-great-grandparents. I might be able to tell you where they were from, but my information is about five seconds' worth and after that I have nothing. That's just a few generations back—and that's my family. Those are people I'd consider to be near and dear to me, yet they're already forgotten.

So I'm here to tell you—and I'm sorry to give you bad news—you're going to be forgotten by the world. This place will remember you no more. I'm not going to lie to you—that's a depressing thought. We all want to be remembered. What did the thief on the cross say to Jesus? "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom" (Luke 23:39-43). We want to be remembered, but the reality is we will die and will be forgotten.

Pancho Villa was a Mexican revolutionary. He was such an outlaw that he was hard to catch and hard to kill, but he did end up getting shot. As he was dying, his compadres gathered around him. He couldn't think of anything to say, because he hadn't prepared himself for that moment. He didn't think it was ever going to come. As he died, he said this. "Don't let it end like this. Tell them I said something good."

My friend, the reality of our frailty is that life is short and this place will not remember us for very long—even if you have some great final words to say. But there is good news.

# Good News

I love the conjunction in Psalm 103: 17—"But..." *"But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments."*

So it is true that we're going to die. It is true that life is short. It is true that this place will remember you no more. But the steadfast love of God is everlasting. What he's saying here is to you who fear Him, to you who keep His covenant, to you who remember to do His commandments. It's to you who have taken upon yourself that covenant of God—the covenant He entered into with Moses on Mt. Sinai. The steadfast love of the Lord lasts forever. God is a covenant-keeping God.

Throughout the pages of Scripture, he is keeping His covenants. He made a covenant with Noah. Remember that covenant? Maybe you've seen the sign recently. It's the rainbow in the sky, the covenant sign that He will not flood the earth again. God made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that He would be their God and they would be His people, that He would bless them and make them numerous, that He would watch over them and that He would make them a blessing to every other nation on the earth. How? The Messiah would be born from the line of David, with whom God also made a covenant.

And now Jesus says at the Last Supper, *"This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me"* (1 Corinthians 11:25). Jesus shed His blood so that you might enter into the presence of God, not by the blood of goats or lambs or any other sacrifice, but by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? He has promised everlasting life. You who would come into a covenant relationship with Jesus must trust in Him and not in yourself. You must have faith that He died for you and that He rose again. If you call on His name, then the words of Scripture will be true for you, that *"everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved"* (Romans 10:13).

It was the final game of the 1972 season in major league baseball. Roberto Clemente was a great player for the Pittsburgh Pirates. He had a cannon of an arm. He had 2,999 hits going into this final game of the season. The announcer for the Pittsburgh Pirates was going into the locker room before the game when he saw the score card the manager had filled out. But he didn't see Roberto's name on the score card. He thought that was odd. He went into the locker room and saw Roberto, so he asked, "Hey, Roberto, why aren't you playing today?" Roberto said, "Well, management said since I have 2,999 hits, they thought maybe it would be a better way to sell tickets if we advertised it in the off-season that I would be getting my 3,000<sup>th</sup> hit next year. So I'm going to sit out this game and wait until next year."

Then the announcer said, "Roberto, you can't do that. You've got to go out and play. You never know if you're going to get another 'at bat.' You never know if you're going to get another chance to play another game." So Roberto Clemente went out and played that game. In the sixth inning he hit a double. He stood at second base and tipped his cap—one of the very few to hit 3,000 career base hits.

Well, the season ended and it wasn't too long after that that Roberto was heading down to Nicaragua to bring supplies to earthquake stricken there. His plane went down and Roberto Clemente died in that airplane crash.

You never know when you're going to get another chance to get another hit. You never know when you're going to get another day. You never know when you're going to have another breath. I wouldn't be doing my job as a shepherd of your soul unless I told you there's coming a day when you're going to have to stand before God and give an account for your life. You can try to answer for your life. You can try to tell God the good outweighed the bad. You can try to point to this or point to that. You can hope He will say, "Well, let's forget about the bad—just come on in." Or you can turn to the One Who died for your sin. You can turn to Jesus Christ, Who was the propitiation in your place. That's the gospel in four words: "Jesus in my place." He died for you and if you believe in Him, the righteousness of God will be given to you. It will be credited to your account, so that when you stand before God, He won't see your sin. Rather, He will see Christ's righteousness.

Would you turn to Jesus and be saved? This is the steadfast love of God that He has for you—*chesed*. It's a loyal love. It's a covenant-keeping love. When you enter into this faith in Jesus Christ, He will never leave you or forsake you. He will never let you go. This is the kind of love that's not based on your performance. Rather, it's based on God's own character. Trust in Him, then sing today with David, "Bless the Lord, O my soul. All that is within me, bless His holy name."