

Sermon Script

Title: **How to Talk to Yourself**

Scripture: Psalm 103:1–22

Thank you, Sister Sandra, for reading Psalm 103. What a beautiful psalm it is.

We will continue the sermon series on Psalms that Pastor Ken began. The purpose of this series is to help us better understand the different types of psalms and taste their various "flavors." Today, I am bringing you another flavor: Psalm 103.

Clearly, this is a psalm of praise. Yet, it is very different from other psalms of praise.

Among the psalms, there is loud, high-volume of praise—for example, Psalm 150 (or Psalm 47, among others):

【Ps150:3】 Praise him with the **sounding of the trumpet**, praise him with the harp and lyre,

【Ps150:4】 **praise him with timbrel** and dancing, praise him with the strings and pipe,

【Ps150:5】 praise him with **the clash of cymbals**, praise him with **resounding cymbals**.

【Ps47:1】 **Clap your hands**, all you nations; **shout to God with cries of joy**.

【Ps47:2】 For the Lord Most High is awesome, the great King over all the earth.

Psalms like these are many. These hymns of praise are not quiet meditations; they are high in volume, intense in emotion, accompanied by instruments—an overwhelming "joyful noise."

There is also deep, from the low places praise in the Psalms—for example, Psalm 130:

【Ps130:1】 **Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord;**

【Ps130:6】 **I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning**, more than watchmen wait for the morning.

【Ps130:7】 Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption.

This kind of praise rises like a faint yet exceedingly resilient declaration from the deepest depths of the soul—as if in a dark valley, in the middle of the night.

There is also vast, expansive praise in the Psalms—for example, Psalm 148:

【Ps148:7】 **Praise the Lord from the earth, you great sea creatures** and all ocean depths,

【Ps148:8】 **lightning and hail, snow and clouds**, stormy winds that do his bidding,

【Ps148:9】 you **mountains** and all hills, fruit **trees** and all cedars,

【Ps148:10】 wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds,
【Ps148:11】 kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth,
【Ps148:12】 young men and women, old men and children.

This praise stretches endlessly through space and time. The psalmist is no longer confined to humanity; he draws the entire universe into a grand symphony of praise.

But the psalm we are looking at today is different. It is not talking about the high, the low, or the vast. This psalm starts with four "alls," and it ends with four "alls."

【Ps103:1】 Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

【Ps103:2】 Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—

【Ps103:3】 who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,

【Ps103:19】 The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.

【Ps103:20】 Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.

【Ps103:21】 Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.

【Ps103:22】 Praise the Lord, all his works everywhere in his dominion. Praise the Lord, my soul.

The four "alls" at the start: "all my inmost being"—everything inside me, all that I am; "all his benefits" bestowed by God; forgiving "all your sins"; healing "all your diseases."

The four "alls" at the end: His kingdom ruling over "all"; "all" His heavenly hosts, He is their commander; "all" His works that He created; and "everywhere," that means "all" places where He rules. In the original Hebrew, every one of these is the very same word.

This is an all-in psalm.

Throughout the entire psalm, the only God's name used is Yahweh (LORD). It mentions no historical background, no enemies, no petitions, and no requests. Emotionally, there is no anxiety, no disappointment, no grief, and no complaining. There is only absolute, pure worship—a worship overflowing with joy and gratitude, rising from the depth of a person who has truly grasped the reality of eternal salvation.

More importantly, this psalm is not directed outward but inward. the psalmist (many commentators believe this was David, written in his old age) never once speaks to anyone else, and never directly prays to God. Instead, he turns his gaze inward and talk to himself.

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones famously wrote in *Spiritual Depression*:

“Most unhappiness in life is due to the fact that we ‘listen to ourselves’ instead of ‘talking to ourselves’.”

The main reason we so often fall into depression and anxiety is that we passively listen to our own negative emotions, rather than actively preaching God’s truth to our own souls.

C.S. Lewis writes in *Reflections on the Psalms*:

“The most valuable result of the Psalms is to show, within the Bible itself, that dynamic, dialectic process which we call ‘talking to oneself’.”

“Dynamic” means it is not static, lifeless doctrine or passive recitation. It is an active, living internal dialogue where emotions, doubts, faith, and memory interact in real-time.

And “Dialectic” referring to seeking truth through reasoned dialogue between opposing sides (e.g., Thesis vs. Antithesis → Synthesis). In the Psalms, the "flesh" (fear, anxiety, despair) speaks first, but the "redeemed soul" (faith, God's promises, memory of grace) pushes back, ultimately elevating the heart into worship.

Spiritual maturity does not mean anxious voices never surface within you; it means you learned how to respond to those voices with God’s truth.

Do not merely listen to your emotions. Learn to talk to yourself, be the "preacher" to your own soul.

Let’s look at Verse 1, in the old English translations, it reads,

【Ps103:1】 Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

【Psm103:1】 Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.

Can a human being "bless" the Lord? Usually in our understanding, "blessing" flows from someone higher in authority or power to someone lower—like God blessing humans, or elders blessing the younger generation. But the Hebrew word Barakh (בָּרַךְ) is very interesting. Depending on how this word attach to, it can carry two different nuances. Aside from meaning "to bless," it shares its root with the word for "knee." So it can also describe an action: "kneeling before God to receive His blessing, and then bless, or praise Him in return." That is why this word can be translated as "bless" or "praise."

To bless or praise God is to openly acknowledge and thank Him for every aspect of His care in our lives, from the greatest to the smallest. If the blessings God bestows upon us do not return to Him in praise, those blessings do not form a closed loop. Jewish rabbi used to say: "To enjoy anything of this world without a blessing is like stealing." We might ask ourselves: over the course of our lives, how much have we actually stolen?

"All my inmost being", or "all that is within me"—the Hebrew word here is *qereb* (קֶרֶב, pronounced *keh'-reb*), which refers to internal organs or deep inner parts (like the heart, intestines, kidneys). Just like ancient Chinese, ancient Hebrews believed emotions and thoughts were embedded within internal organs. In other words, David is essentially crying out: "All my inner organs, wake up and worship!" He is forcefully summoning every cell, every nerve, from head to toe, mobilizing his willpower and full attention to worship God.

Well, full attention sometimes is quite hard for me, because I had ADHD since I was a kid. You guys know what ADHD stands for, right? ADHD stands for Attention Deficit... oh Hot Dog.

Please allow me to borrow some computer terminology to explain what David is doing here. When we boot up a computer, the operating system loads from the hard drive into RAM (Random Access Memory). RAM is extremely fast to access, but its capacity is limited. Our applications run inside RAM. If the power suddenly cuts out, any unsaved draft in RAM disappears. The hard drive, on the other hand, has vast storage; it holds all data long-term—even after the power is off, the files on it remain intact.

What these two verses mean is that when the RAM of our soul is cluttered with negative information—anxiety, hurt, fear, and so on—David says: "I will talk to myself. I will reboot this 'computer' that I am, clear out the temporary data in RAM, and re-read from the hard drive those forgotten benefits of God, so that my 'computer,' this person can function properly once again."

It is like forcefully tightening every loose, out-of-tune string of the soul before playing a hymn of praise.

Before we praise, we first count God's blessings. I remember an old song that goes: "Count your blessings, name them one by one, Count your many blessings, then what? see what God has done!" It might sound a bit childish, but that is the very fountain of praise.

Even King David could not list every single benefit stored on his hard drive. So, David gives us a checklist to help us not to forget:

【Ps103:3】 who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,

We are to remember His benefits, but praise God, He does not remember our sins! This checklist begins with the complete forgiveness of our sins—because, isn't that the very essence of the Gospel? The Gospel is not merely about a better life, a happy life, or a more satisfied life. It is not about improving our circumstances; it is about the forgiveness

of sins. Unless sins are forgiven and the conscience is declared guiltless before the law, the soul can never enjoy true healing and restoration.

The second item on the list is the **healing** of diseases, showing God's care for our physical bodies. In this life, God brings healing through natural laws or supernatural miracles; He also fundamentally reshapes and heals the "order of our lives" that sin has broken, and He promises that in the age to come, He will give ultimate healing to all His people—what we call the Resurrection.

We can put it this way: He not only heals the sicknesses of our bodies, but He also heals the diseases of our souls—He heals "all" your diseases.

【Ps103:4】 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,

The word "**redeem**" refers to a person enslaved and powerless to free themselves, and someone steps in as a "kinsman-redeemer," paying the price, pull that person back from the black hole of destruction. Many of us have personally experienced God's immense grace in saving us from desperate situations. The very fact that we are alive today reflects God's divine preservation, keeping His children from countless unseen dangers. God has always been there, redeeming our lives from the pit. He covers us with His steadfast love and compassion, which becomes our sacred dignity —our **crown**.

【Ps103:5】 who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

The outcome of God's work— wherever He rescues us from, and whatever abundance He brings us into —is to bring true satisfaction to our lives. This "satisfaction" is fundamentally different from worldly, fleeting entertainment or sensory stimulation. This satisfaction becomes the source of strength and vitality for God's people. We receive fresh, abundant power, allowing a weary, dried-up soul to regain strength, soaring like an eagle above the storm.

David's checklist contains forgiveness, healing, redemption, crowning, and satisfaction—a "fivefold" blessing of God's grace. Reloading the memory of these mercies from our hard drive enables our soul to praise the Lord.

Then in verses 6–10, David's perspective expands from personal experiences of grace to the collective redemptive history of Israel. God actively reveals His ways and deeds to His people. He **works righteousness**, yet He is **abounding in love**. He maintains **justice for all the oppressed**, yet He does not **treat us as our sins deserve**.

But how can a righteous God choose not to treat us as our sins deserve?

We don't have time to go through every single verse today, but there are two verses I particularly want to highlight:

【Ps103:11】 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him;

【Ps103:12】 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

The distance between heaven and earth is beyond our measurement. "Heaven" represents the supreme, unreachable realm. "Love" here is *Hesed* (חֶסֶד, pronounced *kheh-sed*), the Hebrew word referring to God's faithful, covenant-keeping, unchanging love. When David wants to describe God's love, he doesn't use ordinary words like "big" or "much"; he tells us to lift our eyes to the heaven.

And "fear" does not mean a slave's dread of a tyrant; it means the reverence, honor, and trust a citizen has for a supreme king, or a child for a loving father. God's love far surpasses human imagination and experience—it is vast enough to cover all the weaknesses and shortcomings of us who fear Him. Our ingratitude and stubborn sinfulness would exhaust anyone's patience—except for this God who loves us without limit.

East and west never meet. This means our transgressions are not merely "covered up" or "temporarily moved aside"; they are removed from us to an infinite distance. Sin no longer clings to us, nor can it accuse us before God.

As Jeremiah notes: "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." (Jeremiah 31:34)

as high as the heavens are above the earth — as far as the east is from the west —
brothers and sisters, what is this?

These two verses find their ultimate, perfect fulfillment on the cross of Christ in the New Testament—on that vertical and horizontal beam of wood, heaven's love came down to earth, and our transgressions were carried infinitely far away.

Bless the LORD, O my soul.

Ok, let's quickly look at the remaining verses.

Why is God so full of compassion? Verse 13 tells us: He is a father. Verse 14: And He knows how we are formed. Verses 15–18: Human life is brief like grass, human glory like

a flower of the grass. Genesis 3 says: "for dust you are and to dust you will return." This is the most realistic, helpless picture of humanity facing decay and vanity.

But then comes the great turning point! (v.17) For the third time, the passage mentions "those who fear Him." They are (v.18) those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts. God lifts them out of the dust so that they no longer return to dust. He chose them from everlasting, and He will be with them everlasting. Furthermore, God chooses their descendants, allowing His grace to pass from generation to generation.

Finally, in verses 19–22, we hear the grand chorus of the universe. At the conclusion of the psalm, David leads his heart to lift its perspective from personal dimensions all the way to the heavenly throne that rules over all. Yet after conducting this earth-shaking symphony of praise involving angels, heavenly hosts, and all creatures, David suddenly—at the peak of this overwhelming momentum—turns the volume back down to the quietest "solo of the heart":

"Praise the Lord, my soul!"

David clearly understands: although the choir of the entire universe is magnificent, if it lacks "me"—this tiny, weak individual soul redeemed by precious blood—this worship offered to God would still feel incomplete to David. It is as if, even if man is dust and to dust he shall return, then let this dust, as it scatters at last, use every final ounce of strength to utter its ultimate praise.

The deepest praise of a Christian is often not born of outward abundance or smooth circumstances, but of the inward knowledge of just what kind of God our God truly is.

In 1974, a boy was born in England into a tragic family situation. When he was just seven years old, his father committed suicide, though he didn't learn how his father died until he was ten. His mother remarried a very abusive step-father, making life extremely painful for the boy and his family until the step-father was eventually sent to prison.

Growing up amidst abuse and struggle, this young boy attended a missionary crusade, was convicted by the Holy Spirit, and gave his life to Christ. Later, to praise the Lord who saved him, he began writing music.

He wrote the song "10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord, O My Soul)." His name is Matt Redman, and that famous worship song is based directly on Psalm 103.

Closing Prayer:

Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise His holy name!

Lord, we can never finish counting the benefits You have given us, nor can we count all the reasons to praise You. The wondrous love revealed on the cross deeply draws us, filling us with a longing to praise You, glorify You, and honor You. Lord, we want to offer You this kind of all-in, wholehearted praise. Please help us, accept our offerings, and fulfill this in our lives.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.