

DON'T FORGET TO REMEMBER! PSALM 103.

This psalm is a much loved and familiar song of praise: familiar, in part, as it is on this psalm that Henry Francis Lyte based his hymn: Praise my soul the King of heaven.

Setting the Scene: Before you look at the psalm in detail, give yourself three minutes to write a thanks and praise list of the things you are thankful to God for.

Now share appropriate parts of your list with the rest of the group.....

The psalm naturally divides into 3 parts:

a. God's Blessing on us as individuals. (Verses 1-5)

(1) The writer talks to himself! What are the blessings mentioned in these opening verses which stir him to praise the Lord? Which speaks most powerfully to you?

(2) How can we guard against falling into the trap mentioned in verse 2?

(NB. This is a trap that is all too easy to fall into when we're under pressure!)

(3) ".....who forgives all your sins"(verse 3) Why do people find it so difficult (or even impossible) to accept God's forgiveness? Reflect on these words of Billy Graham - "In these days of guilt complexes perhaps the most glorious word in the English language - or any language for that matter - is forgiveness.

b. God's mercy and love for His people (verses 11 - 18)

4 What principles from verses 9 to 14 characterise God' dealing with His people?

Are they adequately summed up in Henry Francis Lyte's hymn - 'slow to chide and swift to bless'?

5 Verses 15-17 provide 'such a powerful message of hope at countless funeral services' Why?

c. God's rule over all His creation (verses 19-22).

6 This psalm starts with a single worshipper praising and thanking God from the depths of his being. But it rises in a crescendo through all of God's people to His angels, mighty ones, heavenly hosts, servants, in fact "all his works everywhere in His dominion" - that is to say the whole of creation

Reflect: When I praise God, I am never alone, and my praise is only a tiny part of the whole. Wherever we are - even in lockdown - the moment we start to praise God we step out of time and into the eternal company of angels, saints, prophets, martyrs, and all God's people. What does this say to you?

7. Look again at the list you wrote at the beginning. Do you want to add anything?