

Well, good morning Valley Creek family. It is so good to be with you. Will you all join in and let's welcome all of our family in from Gainesville and Denton, Flower Mound, Venue, Lewisville and everyone online, it is good to be together today. I'm really glad that you're here today because we are on the final stretch of our summer series, 60 Days: Songs of Life. We have been taking this journey through the Book of Psalms and what have we seen? We have seen the strength of God and we have seen the struggle of man and it's all been woven together in these beautiful poetic psalms.

And I'll tell you what I have decided. I think there is a Psalm for every day. If you're having a good day, there's a Psalm for that. If you're having a day that makes you go rrrmph, there's a Psalm for that. So I hope that you've been tracking with us. And if you haven't, that's okay. Decide to jump in today and finish with us. And if you're saying, you know what, I don't know where to start, I'm going to suggest you start with the Psalm that I want to speak from today. And let me tell you why. It is one chapter that is full of theology. It's God telling us about Himself. He tells us about His character, that He is compassionate and gracious. He tells us about what matters to Him, like justice for the oppressed. He tells us about our relationship with Him, that He doesn't hold our sin against us.

See, the psalm that I'm talking about is Psalm 103. The author of this psalm is David. And you know what, David just comes out the gate, he starts this psalm off really, really strong with a declaration of who God is and what God does for us. Starting off in verse 3, take a look at this, "Our God who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's." That is the declaration of who our God is. And it is outstanding and it is amazing, it is tremendous. But as much as I'm trying -- I'm trying to get my head and my heart around this one, this isn't the verse that actually messed with me. The verse that messed with me is the one verse before it, verse 2.

Because verse 2 says, "Praise the Lord my soul," but catch it, "and forget not all His benefits." Forget not. Now, I'm thinking but these benefits are unforgettable. I mean how could you forget that He forgives and He heals? How could we forget that He redeems and He crowns? How could we forget that He satisfies and He renews? But the author of this is David. And so you have to stop and think, David is the guy that fought the lion and the bear. David is the guy that God gave the courage and the victory to take down Goliath. David is the guy who God saw as a teenager and said, yeah, you're going to be king when his own father didn't even acknowledge him. Now, if I had any of those memories, any of those experiences, I think I would remember it forever, wouldn't you? But maybe we wouldn't.

Because David is the one who's telling us, forget not His benefits. What David is telling us is don't forget to remember. And so if David needs to tell himself that, then maybe we need to tell ourselves that too. Don't forget to remember. Because the truth is we're forgetful people. We forget things a lot. Okay, maybe all don't, I forget things a lot. But we do, let's be honest.

We forget things a lot. And so David's trying to tell us to remember. And it's one of those situations where you think, I don't really know why do we remember what we remember and forget what we forget. Like you think about it, like how is it that we can remember lines from a movie or song lyrics from 20 years ago or 10 years ago or 5 years ago, but we can't remember the verse that we actually meditated on 2 days ago, have you ever thought about that? Why is that? And you think, well, we live in a day of technology, so technology helps us remember. No, it doesn't.

I can prove this one. A couple of weeks ago, my family, we were getting all dressed up to go out to a nice dinner to celebrate my son's birthday. And it just so happened that I was the first one dressed and ready to go, shocking I know. But I came downstairs, and I knew we were going to take my husband's truck, and I knew that his truck was out of gas. And so I thought, well, while he was getting dressed, I'll just go and put gas in the truck. By the time I get back, everybody will be ready you we'll have the reservation and we'll be fine, so I did. A short while later my husband is dressed and ready to go, he comes downstairs and he too knows we're taking his truck and he thinks, you know, it was 180 degrees outside, it was 110 literally. And he thought, I just want to the cool the cab down for my family because he's a great man. So he goes and gets phone and on the app on his phone, he remote starts his truck. Now, what he didn't know is that his truck is not in the driveway like he thinks it is. His truck is like blocks away with me.

So if you can imagine the startled look on my face when I'm sitting there waiting for the truck, you know, get the gas and all of a sudden it starts itself. I don't think it's supposed to do that while I'm pumping gas. So I quickly tried to get the keys out of the ignition and not only had it started itself, it had locked all its doors. And I had a flashback to the Transformers movie, I thought I have driven a Decepticon and it's happening right now. And so I tried to go door to door literally because I need to call my husband. Where's my phone? My phone is inside of the locked running Decepticon. Now, the guy on the other side who was putting gas in his car, he watched this whole thing play out. It was about this time that he stepped over and said, do you need some help? And I said, can I borrow your phone? I need to call my husband. So he hands me his phone, I called my husband and he doesn't pick up. Did I tell you it was 110? I was so hot. And so I was like, okay, okay, okay. My daughter's home, she's getting dressed. I'll just call her. So I get the phone and I go to press a little button that has her face on it to call her, but it's not there because it's not my phone, it's the stranger's phone.

So I'm thinking, what's her phone number? Think, think, think, think, what is it? 2-1-4, 2-1-4, I can't remember. And so I'm like, okay, my son is at home. Call him. I can't remember his phone number. Now, it has a happy ending. My precious husband came and rescued me, we made the dinner and it was great. So what's the point? Why am I telling you the story? What is the point? The point of that story is it doesn't always pay to be the first one dressed and ready to go. No, that's not -- I don't know. No. Here's the point. The point of that story is we have access to a lot of technology that makes it really, really hard to remember and really, really easy

to forget important things in our life. I can remember the phone number of the land line the house I grew up in as a little girl, but I don't know my own kids' phone numbers. See, the technology that we have today, we don't have to think.

And you have to think to remember, but realize how much we don't have to think. We've got cars that drive themselves. We've got cash registers that tell the cashier how much change to get. Do you all know how much trouble we would be in if we had to count back change? And some places are like it's so much trouble to forget it, we're not even going to take cash, we're only going to take credit cards because that way you don't have to think about it. As a society we stopped thinking, and as a result of that we stopped remembering. And the minute we stop remembering, we are on the threshold of destruction. Now, if you're like, whoa, sounds a little over dramatic, consider this, do you realize that the fall of man happened because Adam and Eve forgot? The first sin that came into the world was because Adam and Eve forgot. They forgot who they were, they forgot who God was, they forgot what God had really told them.

And because the enemy is an opportunist, he swoops right in because he knows the power of remembering. He knows the power that we have when we know who God is and who we are in Jesus. He also knows the power that he gets when we forget it. Now, if it makes you feel any better, we're not the only ones who forget, the Israelites they forgot too. The people with possibly the most unforgettable story of their lives, they forgot. Remember their story, they were in bondage. They cry out, they're people of God, they cry out to God. God hears their cry, He sends Moses in, they go to Pharaoh, ten plagues come along, ten. You have the plague of the frogs, you have the plague of flies, you have the plague of boil. I'm telling you right now, if I saw a plague of boils, I couldn't unsee that and I don't think I'll ever forget it. The Israelites saw this first hand, they saw their own children's lives spared. Now, how do you forget that?

I don't know, but evidently it's possible because look at what God said. God was talking to Moses and the children of Israel. And this is what He tells them, "Be careful and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live." God is saying, you've seen it with your eyes but if you're not careful it can fade from your heart. So can I just ask you, what kind of unforgettable moment have you had with God that maybe you've let fade from your heart? I mean, what was the moment that was undeniably Him? Maybe you saw Him make a provision in your life. Maybe it was the first time you encountered Jesus. Maybe it's a crazy way of how you and your spouse met. I don't know, but it's what we call only God stories. It's like only God could do that. When was the last time you remember that and let it bring refreshment and peace over your heart?

Because see, the moments won't last a lifetime but the memories can, but we have to remember them. So if we know that remembering is really important and we know that we forget, doesn't it beg the question -- I think it just begs the question of why. I mean I want to know why is it that we are so prone to forget. I think there's a lot of reasons, so I want to just

pitch out a few today. See if you catch one, see if one of these resonate with you. But let me start right here. I think that we forget His benefits because we don't know what they are. You can't remember something that you don't know. I started in the marketplace, my first job, Fortune 100 Company, I was 19 years old. And I remember my supervisor the first week said, hey, don't forget to pick up your 401(k) packet. 401(k) packet, I honestly thought it was a vitamin supplement. I did.

I was 19, I didn't know the benefits of the company I belong to. Do you know the benefits of the kingdom you belong to? Because God has something pretty strong to say about knowledge and knowledge of Him and His kingdom. God says that my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Not lack of effort, not lack of even obedience, for lack of knowledge. And this flies in the face of that little saying that we like to say, you know, what I don't know can't hurt me. No, no, what we don't know can destroy us. It can destroy our dreams, it can destroy our hopes, it can destroy our faith. And Jesus knew this. I believe that that's why Jesus knew how important it would be that we remember the benefit of salvation that we have because of what he did on the cross for us. I think that's why he gave us communion to remember. Look what he said, this is him with his disciples. The last supper, 'He takes the bread, Jesus, and gave thanks and he broke it and he gave it to them saying, 'This is my body given for you,' that's your benefit, this – 'do this in remembrance of me.'"

Don't forget to remember. Now, if this is for the disciples who were with him for three years day in, day out, and saw all of his benefits, how much more might this be true of us? Don't forget to remember, but we've got to know them to remember them. Another reason that I think that we forget, I think we forget his benefits because we aren't present to experience them. I think a lot of us live our lives day by day but frankly I think we're absent moment by moment. I think we're not present in a lot of our lives. And you have to be present in a moment for that moment to become a memory. And if we spend all of our lives trying to escape all of these moments, then we won't have any memories to recall. But see, it's chaos, chaos pulls us out of being present and when that happens distraction comes right in, he's the thief of our memories.

I think the disciples had a little experience with this one too. Do you remember the feeding 5,000? Okay, the feeding of 5,000 is in Matthew chapter 14. It's the end of a long ministry day, the disciples were there with Jesus, they're tired, there's 5,000 people that are hungry, there's not a Whataburger anywhere around. The disciples look at Jesus and say, what are we going to do? And so Jesus goes and he gets the fish and the loaves and he does a miracle. He actually puts it in the hand of the disciples. They have the benefit of God in their hand as they're feeding these people. Surely, they were present in the moment and got it. If they were, how do we explain the very next chapter? Because in the very next chapter, they get a do over. It's another day, but it's the same scenario. End of a long day of ministry, this time there's 4,000 hungry people.

Still no Whataburger. It must have been a Sunday, Chick-fil-A was closed. They look at Jesus and say, what are we going to do? I think he probably looked back at them and was like, are you guys for real? You've already forgot what I just did one chapter ago? Can I ask you, is it possible -- is it possible that you're in a circumstance in your life today because God is good in giving you a do over? Maybe He gave you a chance to see His benefit before but you have missed it, but because He loves us He gives us do overs. I'll tell you where I see this a lot is in parenting. Because our children are blessings, they are benefits of God, and so we get a good opportunity to be present and if we're not then we get a do over. And I'll tell you who knew this really well was Mary, the mother of Jesus.

After she had given birth to Jesus and all the shepherds come running in, can you imagine how chaotic that might have been? They come in, and there's Jesus and we're -- and shepherd, field, and sheep and angels and like it was probably so chaotic, but what did Mary do? You look at what Mary did, Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. Mary didn't get out of that moment, she stayed present because she beheld the very benefit of God. There's something about children, especially little ones, that we have those moments with them and you just want to stay in them. If you're a parent, you can relate to this. Like I remember our daughter when she was first born, baby girl had a rough go of it. She had a lot of health problems and she cried all day for a long time. But there was one morning that she had a good morning.

And I remember as she was laying there in her little bassinet she was smiling and cooing and I had my sweet momma on my left I had my favorite auntie on my right, and I just remember looking down and just -- I think I even closed my eyes, I was like, I just want to remember this , I just want to remember this forever. And I can still remember the feeling of all it even though that baby girl is now 22, engaged and will start her own family one day, God help me. Or what about the funny memories? Like I remember one time we were a family and we were in the car looking at Christmas lights. And my heart was just so full and I remember I was just singing because I was just so in that moment and I just sang out, do you hear what hear? And my 4-year-old son from the backseat sings back, no, what do you hear? Remember that like it was yesterday. He was four, now he's 6 foot 4.

Every parent in here is running it right now. That's how God is saying, do you see -- do you see the power of remembering and going back to a moment, but we've got to remember. And sometimes our lives can get really caught up and really chaotic and we can't even go back and remember because our circumstances are so hard. Okay, don't pull back. Don't lean out from God, lean even in more because there's benefits for those moments. Let's see if you remember a few of these psalms. Take a look. "The righteous person may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all." Okay, if you've got some troubles going on, there is a benefit, it's deliverance from God. Lean in and take that for yourself today. Or what about the next one? "The Lord gives strength to his people. The lord blesses his people with peace." If

you're feeling weak or if you've got a lot of chaos, there's a benefit here. Reach out by faith and take that today. One more. "For the Lord loves the just. He will not forsake his faithful ones."

Do you feel unloved today? Do you feel forsaken? Because He loves you. It's a benefit. His benefits are just in time and they're just what we need, but we have to stay present in that moment so that we'll remember them. Third reason I think we forget, I think we forget His benefits because it hurts too much to remember. We can have some pain in our past and we don't want to go back because it hurt then and it hurts until we had it now. But can I just tell you, tomorrow's freedom is found when we heal the memories of yesterday and God has a benefit for you if we just lean in. And maybe so say, you know what, I thought like that time He withheld His benefits. I don't even think He saw me or heard me. He did because the psalmist said He did. The psalmist says, "Does he who fashioned the ear not hear? Does he who formed the eye not see?"

Okay, he's a little bit of a sarcastic psalmist here, this one. But to be honest with you, sometimes how almost what I need to set myself out if I'm in a pity party. He's going, are you kidding me? I mean, God made eyes, made years. You think He can't see you? He sees you and me. And He hears you and me. And He has benefits that He wants to show you to heal times in your past. Or maybe you say, I don't want to go back but it's not because of that. I don't want to go back because I knew there were benefits, the benefits were laid right out in front of me and I consciously made a bad decision. And so if I go back, now I'm just going to be beat up with shame and guilt. You don't have to be because God says He doesn't remember it. Look, "I will forgive their wickedness and I will remember their sins no more." When you and I confess and repent, and I mean have some godly sorrow in the thing, God forgives it and God forgets it, but He doesn't forget us.

He doesn't forget you. But that can feel really hard to believe and so what we do? We let His voice fade from our heart and we for whatever reason grab hold to those other voices that hurt us in the past. Like that disapproving parent or maybe that critical coach, or the voices of all those people that for whatever reason we just wanted to be accepted by them and they still rejected us anyway. I mean I don't know why, but sometimes we will let the voices of people who don't even know us speak louder than the voice of the God who created us. Whatever it is in your past, there is a benefit, but you have to be willing to go back with Him and remember it. Let me give you one more, one more. I think we forget his benefits because we aren't in a relationship with people who can help us remember them.

See, David sang this psalm and as he did, it wasn't just himself that he was singing to and heard it, his wife heard it, his son Solomon heard it, his best friend Jonathan heard it, his homeboys, all the mighty men that were -- they all heard it. So they knew the song of his heart. So when he got discouraged, they could sing it back. Can I tell you that we need people in relationships that know the song of our heart so they can sing it back when we forget? Because you know, I forget. Maybe you all don't. I have a horrible memory. I have all kinds of tricks. My

family can attest to this that I come up with to remember things. And 10 years ago I even bought a charm bracelet and every single charm on this charm bracelet is symbolic of the very specific moment that I had with the Lord because sometimes when I'm having a down day, I need to look down and be able to know that God's benefits are still with me. Well, just recently, I was having one of those down days. Do you ever have them? It's one of those days that I was just discouraged and defeated.

If I may be really honest with you, I was feeling lonely. I was really lonely that day. And I came into my office and there was a card on my desk and I opened it up. And it was from a really, really sweet friend in the Valley Creek family. I'm not going to tell you her name. I'm not going to tell you what campus she's at. The campus may rhyme with Smainesville, but I opened it. And as I opened it up and I read what she wrote, it was like everything my heart needed in that very -- it was so spirit-led. I mean every word that she had written was exactly what my heart needed to hear. But that's not what took me down. What nearly took me down was when I peeked, there was something else in the envelope and she had a charm made just for me with the three circles on it. And I don't even know if she knew about my charm bracelet but God did.

And in that moment, that was God saying, hey, don't forget to remember that I have set you. God puts the lonely in families -- I have put you in a family of people and this is one of the greatest benefits in my life to you. So I say to you, are you realizing that benefit today? Do you have one or two people that are in this family, not -- this family, Valley Creek family that can sing the song of your heart back over you and vice versa? Are you helping, are you the one on the other side singing that song back to them? Because when you feel that little notch to call so and so, that's God saying, they need something, something and you're the one that's supposed to be giving it to them. But if we're not in relationship with people that know the song of our heart, we will forget His benefits. So that's just a handful. We can talk a whole lot more about them, but for the sake of time, what I really want to do is just kind of turn the corner for us as we wrap this a little bit and say, okay, then how do we practice remembering?

If we know we forget, and we all agree, then how can we practice remembering? What does that even look like? Well, David told us that. He told us that in three words. The first three words of the psalm, "Praise the Lord." That's how we remember. We remember when we praise Him. So can I give you three super-fast handles of how to praise Him that might not be -- because you only think, oh yeah, tell me, next time I need to sing louder, be demonstrative. It's not that. I think there are some ways to praise Him in our everyday life that we don't think of and see it as praise. So how do we praise God and practice remembering, is we do it the first one, we meditate on His benefits. Reading through the Psalms this summer has been great, but the best part has been to receive that challenge of pick one verse and then go deep on it and meditate on that more for five minutes every day. Because when we do, that's when they change.

It goes from being lines on a paper to all of a sudden become living experiences that we have. I've had it. The fall of 2019, I had something happen in my life that frankly scared me to my core, fear that I had never known before then and honestly fear that I've never known since then, the kind that you can't sleep. Two o'clock in the morning, I am walking outside my backyard, sobbing and crying out to God, that kind of fear. But it was in that season when I found Psalm 56. "When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. My God, whose word I praise, my God I trust; I'm not afraid." Now, I can't physiologically explain it to you but I will testify to you when I begin to say that over and over and over, what was a crippling fear in me, I just felt it release. And today when the what-ifs start to get me, I have a memory to go back to of the benefit that He showed me.

Like when I dropped off both of my kids at a university that were hundreds of miles away from my home, and I start saying, oh, what if the world gets them? Oh, what if they forget their -- what if they forgot identity? No, when I'm afraid, I put my trust in you. My God, whose word I praise, God I trust; I'm not afraid." Or my 86-year-old Daddy who now lives by himself because my mom just passed. What if he's lonely? What if he falls? What if he needs me and I'm not there? When I'm afraid, I put my trust in you. My God, whose word I praise, my God I trust; I'm not afraid. I can't explain it, but I can testify to it. And please hear me, I am not sharing that with you to say look at me, I am sharing that with you to say, look at Him because He is the one. If it was up to me, I'd still be in the fetal position in my backyard. He's the one that does that. He did it for me, He'll do it for you. We've got to meditate on His benefits. The second thing is this, we got to make God's people your people. Who are your people? I think all of us know that we weren't meant to live our life alone. I think we've all figured that out.

But my question is, who's your people? Because if you make the people of the world your people, they have got a song too, and it's not the song of life. It is going to be a lullaby of lies. And when you start making choices and I start making choices and we start to drift from God, they are not going to come back in and shore us up with His benefits. They're going to say, it's okay. You be you. I'll just do what feels good. It will work out. That's the lullaby of lies that the world will sing. So I don't know about you, but I want God's people to be my people because I want to march with them. I want to put my beat to my feet and I want to have the ballad of His benefits because that's what the song that's living over my life. I want to remember it together, but to do it I got to make God's people my people. Please make our people your people. Last one is this, make a joyful noise. Do you all realize sometimes praise is just as simple as lifting your voice? And in this world where we have so many people that are negative and grumpy and rrrr and rrrr, sometimes all we have to do is just lift our voice and say something beneficial from God.

It's when the message of our heart becomes the message of our mouth, that is when we actually can change the world. And you know what, we can't be timid about it. I used to be real timid to tell people that I was a pastor, I did. And only because of my own insecurities. Now, I kind of get tickled. If people ask me what I do, I say, have you heard of a life coach? They say,

yeah. I say, I'm kind of an afterlife coach. I get you where you need to go. And it is an amazing ride with Jesus all along the way. And here's why we both have a good laugh. And sometimes we go farther and sometimes we don't. But we're the people of God. We should be joyful. Make a joyful noise. These are three super practical ways that we can practice remembering and its ways that we praise our God. Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits. He forgives, and he heals; He redeems, and he crowns. He satisfies and he renews. Praise the lord."

Don't forget to remember His benefits. Will you close your eyes with me? Listen, I don't know where you came in from today. I don't know if you came in on a high note or sad note or a low note or a lonely note, but this I do know, there is a benefit that God wants you to remember today. What is it? Holy Spirit -- what is He saying to you right now? What is He reminding you of that your heart has forgotten? Where is He saying, be present here because I've got blessings and you're just missing them?

Where is He saying, just know, know me, know that I am God because all of it is for you? So Father, I thank you. Thank you for the amazing way that you care for your children. You love us so deeply and it doesn't matter on our behavior, it matters who we belong to and we belong to you in Jesus' name. And because of that, we can be the beneficiaries of your kingdom. Lord, I pray you would show that to me deeper in my heart and would you show that to us as a church family. How do we tell a world that is desperate? Desperate that there are benefits eternally for them and for their good? And incidentally, if you have not had that moment, that moment when you have said, okay, I'm done trying it my way. Jesus, I want to go your way, I want to surrender to you, I want to receive you.

If you haven't had that moment yet, o friend, that is the moment that will forever live in your heart. So I want to invite you at the end of this. At every room that you're at, there will be someone that you can come up and talk to and say, I want that Jesus moment and I want it right now. And it is available and it is yours and that can happen today. So thank you Lord for this amazing family. Thank you for your benefits. May we live a full life not forgetting to remember, in Jesus' name I pray, amen.