



WINTER-TIME DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS

Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

February 3, 2023



Photo: Our Daily Bread

MERCY FOR YOU AND ME

He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever.

Psalm 103:9

READ Psalm 103:8 - 12

One of consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic was the docking of cruise ships and the quarantining of passengers. *The Wall Street Journal* featured an article that included interviews of some of the tourists. Commenting about how being quarantined provided more opportunities for conversations, one passenger joked how his spouse—who possessed an excellent memory—was able to bring up every transgression he ever had and sensed she wasn't done yet!

Accounts like this might make us smile, remind us of our humanness, and serve to caution us if we're prone to hold too tightly to the things we should release. Yet what helps us to be kindly disposed to those who hurt us? Glimpses of our great God, as He's portrayed in passages like Psalm 103:8–12.

The Message's rendering of verses 8–10 is noteworthy: "God is sheer mercy and grace; not easily angered, he's rich in love. He doesn't endlessly nag and scold, nor hold grudges forever. He doesn't treat us as our sins deserve, nor pay us back in full for our wrongs." Asking for God's help as we prayerfully read Scripture can cause us to have second thoughts about ill-conceived payback or plans to punish. And it can prompt prayers for ourselves and for those we may be tempted to harm by withholding grace, mercy, and forgiveness.

By Arthur Jackson

PRAY & REFLECT

God of mercy, kindness, and forgiveness, please help me to extend grace and mercy to those who've caused me pain. Amen.

Who have you been tempted to harm because of the hurt they've caused you? Who can you ask to pray for you?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Psalm 103:8 recalls how God revealed Himself to Moses during the exodus from Egypt. After Moses pleaded with God to "show me your glory" (Exodus 33:18), God promised to let His glory pass by Moses. In Exodus 34, we're told that God "passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin'" (vv. 6–7).

Psalm 103 elaborates on God's endless compassion, mercy, and grace as the only hope for His sinful people. He is a forgiving God who "does not treat us as our sins deserve" (v. 10) but removes our sin "as far as the east is from the west" (v. 12). God's willingness to forgive is rooted in His deep love for His children and compassionate understanding of their struggles (vv. 11, 13). – By **Monica La Rose**

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