

*This is an excerpt from **Praying the Gospel**, preached by Timothy Keller, on Psalm 103, March 19, 2000, at Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York City. A recording of the entire sermon may be purchased at*

<http://www.gospelinlife.com/praying-the-gospel-5226.html>

. . . What you have here is not exactly a rarity, but there aren't a lot of psalms like it. It's a general psalm about how to handle life in general. It, in a sense, gives you the key approach to handle all of life's circumstances, no matter what they are. The principle is applied in different ways to despondency and fear and anxiety, all of the things we've been looking at, but in here what you actually have is David is laying out the basic key to deal with all conditions, all circumstances of life, any situation. It's, in a way, the basic way to handle the problems of life. That's what this psalm is about. . .

. . . David is saying, "The main thing I need to do, the main thing *you* need to do, the main way to honor God, the main way to handle life, is to **not forget**. Or the main problem we have is that we forget what God has done." I know that's anticlimactic. I know you say, "That's it?" The problem is our stupid English word *remember*. Our word for *remember* is so much more shallow than the biblical and Hebrew concept, that I'm going to have to spend the sermon explaining it to show you why David knows whereof he speaks.

David is calling for something far deeper than mental recall, and he's dealing with something far more transforming than just counting your blessings. He's not just saying, "Oh, count your blessings." It's something else. What is it? *Remember*. What *is* that? We're going to learn here *why* we need to remember, *where* we need to remember, *what* we need to remember, and *how* we need to remember. This is the key to handling life.

1. *Why we need to remember*. Why would this whole magnificent psalm be completely dedicated to remembering, or to not forgetting? "Forget not," of course, is a kind of double negative. When he says, "Forget not," what he means is, "Remember." What *is* forgetting, as far as God is concerned? What is forgetting and remembering? What is it, why is it so hard, and why is it so important?

If you go into the Bible... If you just look up in the concordance, you're amazed at the prominence of the terms *remembering* and *forgetting*. For example, in Isaiah 51, God says, "You are afraid of mortal men who are but grass, and you forget the Lord your Maker who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth." See, God says, "If you're afraid of anybody, you're forgetting me."

Second Peter 1, verses 8-11... There's a kind of long catalog, and here's the gist of it. I don't want to read the whole thing. Peter is saying, "Grow in faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, kindness, and love, and if you're not growing in these things, if you're not adding these things, it is because you have forgotten you are cleansed from your past sins."