

MESSAGE BIG IDEA

When you are good, move toward God and celebrate his goodness.

SCRIPTURE

Psalms 103

POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND

1. Read Psalm 103. Unlike many of the Psalms, David is not petitioning God. He is praising God, blessing God for blessings, entirely grateful for all the good God had done throughout his life. He remembers the good.
2. We all want things to go well in our lives and in the lives of those we care for, and we certainly should enjoy those times without some sense of impending doom. But it's important to remember God is the one who brought us to the place of joy and ease; we can't get there on our own. Like David in the Psalm, it's important in all times to look back and remember all the good God has done for us.
3. It seems odd to say it, but it can be challenging to remember God during the good times. We often get complacent when things are good. Instead of remembering who blessed us with the good we're experiencing, we start to cruise and drift. Especially when things are good, we can't forget who God is and what he has done. This is what fuels our life with God and encourages our souls. In all times, challenging or good, we need to remember God.
4. Self-reliance feeds our self-esteem and self-worth. And while we, as a society, usually consider this a positive trait, it can lull us into thinking we don't need others or invest ourselves fully in relationships. God gets put on the back burner of our lives. This is where the trouble starts.
5. We can too quickly turn God's benefits into what our culture sees as success and then expect God to deliver on those material benefits. The following few paragraphs are worth thinking about and even sharing in the group, should the conversation go in this direction.

In his book *The Next Evangelicalism*, Soong-Chan Rah writes about the need for the church in the west to see those who are suffering and oppressed. Drawing on the life and ministry of Jesus, he argues for Christians to embrace a theology of celebration and suffering.

This is how he defines celebration: "A theology of celebration emerges out of the context of affluence and abundance and focuses on the proper management and stewardship of the abundant resources that God has provided. In the theology of celebration, maintaining and preserving the status quo becomes a central priority: the theology of celebration is a theology of the resurrection."

He also defines a theology of suffering as "emerging out of the context of scarcity and oppression and therefore focuses on the need for salvation and survival. In the theology of suffering, fighting injustice becomes the central priority. The theology of suffering is a theology of the cross."

Rah argues that if we hope to be ready for what's "next" in our world, we must embrace a theology of suffering and celebration and those who have lived those experiences.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

1. Where do you see God at work in your life right now?
2. What next steps do you feel called to take in your faith journey?
3. Have you considered getting baptized? communitychristian.org/baptism