

Praise to An Unfair God, by Daniel H. Kuhn, Jr. 13070826
Psalm 103:1-22 and Luke 13:10-17
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God is unfair. God must be unfair, to hear some of the phrases we use. “The good die young.”

“Why do innocent babies die?”

“So and so didn’t deserve that illness--look at what a good person she is”

“I worked hard, and he got the promotion. God is unfair.”

Yes, I agree God is unfair. You and I do not deserve all of the good that happens to us. You and I did not deserve the families into which we were born or the country in which we were born. As much as we say we worked for them, we do not really deserve the homes in which we live. They are mansions compared to the shacks or cardboard or caves in which some live. And, although we say we worked for them, we have had breaks in our lives– unfair breaks.

We do not deserve our ease of living and our full dinner plates, but we have our families, homes, and food! We have them and we can be thankful for them.

Think right now of three of your greatest blessings. Perhaps you can’t stop at three. What are your greatest blessings in life? Do you deserve them? That word deserve is a silly concept. It is part of a pop psychology and is an advertizing ploy. “When you are a success,” they tell us, “you deserve a Lexus, or a Tiffany diamond, or a Rolex watch.”

We do not deserve what we have in life, the good or the bad. We simply have what we have in life, the good and the bad. It is up to us to accept and live with the good and the bad. It is not that we deserve anything.

God is unfair. We can say with the psalmist, God “does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.”¹ (An iniquity is a gross immorality or injustice.) Our blessings and our misfortunes are not matters of reward or punishment.

I am glad that God is unfair. I have sinned plenty, and I have committed iniquities. I deserve punishment. Instead, I receive grace. God is unfair. Yet, the Psalmist says, “The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.”²

How do you account for the ways in which we have been blessed? How do you justify your home, your family, your job, and your full dinner plate? God’s ways are not our ways. God is loving and grace-ful. “...as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion for his children, so the LORD has compassion for those who fear him.”³ If the word “fear” bothers you, then use the word “love” in its place. I justify the use of the word fear in relation to God this way. We fear many things in life such as loss of a job, loss of a sense like eyesight, illness, and death. If we fear the loss of God’s love (which can never happen) more than anything else, then we have our priorities in order.

It is difficult for us to understand such a forgiving and loving God, because it is difficult for us to forgive those who wrong us. We can hold a grudge for weeks at a time. Some of us hold a grudge for years. What we tend to do, then, is to think of God in terms we know. If I hold a grudge, then God must hold grudges. Can you believe how many times we have hurt God,

¹Psalm 103:10

²Ps. 103:8

³Psalm 103:11-13

breaking God's rules, and turning our backs on God's love? We would expect God to hold a grudge, and so we think that God could not forgive us. Not so. God is loving and forgiving, more than we can comprehend. Aren't you glad that God is unfair?!

But, there is more. God satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The really old people are the grumpy people. You don't have to be old in years to be grumpy. The person of any age can complain and be grumpy. The person who is satisfied and feels blessed is thankful and youthful.⁴

Evelyn Terrell, in her nineties, maintained her youthfulness and thankfulness. She would scold her friends if they started complaining. In her school teacher voice, she would say, "Oh, stop complaining and count your blessings!"

How do we respond to God for this wonderful goodness given to us? We "bless God."⁵ You might ask, "How do I bless God? – I don't even know what a 'blessing' is?" A blessing is to "say a good word."

How do we say a good word for God? "God, I thank you." – that is a good word.

"God, you're great!" – that is a good word."

"God, this earth, the lakes, the sunset, the stars, are wonderful." – that is good word.

Blessing God is praising God.

The Psalmist said, "Bless God, O my soul."⁶ What is a soul? It is mentioned often along with the heart: "my heart and soul." The soul is the very center of one's being. It is the entirety of emotions. It is an individual. This is a Hebrew Psalmist, living long before the Greek influence of soul/body dualism upon the Judeo-Christian faith. Soul for Hebrews meant the entire being of a person. People didn't have bodies, they were living bodies. The soul meant the unity of a person, the entirety of the person. "I will bless God with the entirety of my being– my body, my mind, my words, and my actions." So, everything I am, say, and do, will speak a good word for God.

We praise God by blessing others. Blessing is saying a good word to and for them. We will say a good word to God by providing a meal at the Allied Churches Shelter. We will cheer up a check-out person at the grocery store. We will help a child feel loved and wanted. We will give food to a hungry person through Loaves and Fishes.

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits--

who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,

who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's."⁷

⁴Psalm 103:5

⁵Psalm 103:1, 22

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ps. 103:1-5