

Bless
the Lord,
O my soul,

and all that is within me,
bless his holy name.

PSALM 103:1

Reflection:

November 2026

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!"
(Psalm 103:1)

Most of us love to sing the hymn Bless the Lord, O My Soul. But have we ever paused to meditate on the depth of David's cry? Why does he speak to his own soul, urging it to praise the Lord? The next verse gives a hint: "forget not all his benefits" (v. 2). Perhaps David understands how easily our hearts forget God, and how deliberately we sometimes need to turn our attention back to him.

Our lives are filled with deadlines, responsibilities and concerns about the future. We are also conscious of our weaknesses, repeated failures, and unresolved struggles. These can occupy so much of our attention that they become the lens through which we see our lives. It is like gazing into the darkness of the night without looking up at the vast sky above. When we lift our eyes, the stars do not make the darkness disappear, but they reveal a beauty and vastness we had failed to notice. Our struggles remain real, but they no longer fill the whole sky.

David invites us to lift our eyes towards God. His words, "all that is within me," show that he desires more than an outward expression of praise. He wants his entire being to bless the Lord. Our intellect, memory, will, and affections are all to be directed towards Him. When our intellect turns towards the truth of who God is, our memory recalls His goodness, our will chooses to trust Him, and our hearts respond with love and gratitude. Praise becomes a response of our whole person, not merely a song on our lips.

Yet our attention easily wanders. St Francis de Sales observes, "What men do not see, they easily forget." He urges us to "rouse the soul to a steadfast remembrance and thought of the Presence of God." What occupies my thoughts most of the time? Do I dwell mainly on my failures, worries and unfinished tasks, or do I deliberately recall God's goodness and faithfulness?

At the heart of this remembrance is the Hebrew word *chesed*: God's steadfast love, covenant faithfulness and mercy. "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love" (v. 8). His love is not a reward for our goodness, nor is it withdrawn whenever we stumble. This does not make our sins unimportant; rather, it gives us courage to acknowledge them, repent, and return to Him with confidence. When I look back over this past week, where have I seen his steadfast love? Where have I overlooked it?



Perhaps we could begin today. Let us choose a few quiet moments each day, on waking, at a meal, or on a journey. Let us pause, whisper, "Bless the Lord, O my soul," and name one mercy we have received. Slowly, this small habit teaches the soul to look up.

There will be days when this feels impossible, days of grief, dryness, or exhaustion. Notice that David commands his soul; perhaps even he found it unwilling at times. On such days, praise is an act of the will before it is a feeling, and a whispered "Bless the Lord" is still a true offering that God gladly receives.

How wonderful it would be if each of us learned to remind our own souls to bless the Lord at all times! A life of praise is at the heart of Jesus Youth spirituality. May we become men and women whose hearts continually remember His goodness and whose lives bear witness to His faithfulness.

When we gather as a fellowship, we bring with us the life we have cultivated with the Lord. How beautiful it becomes when praise flows spontaneously from hearts that have learnt to bless Him in everyday life! A newcomer may not be able to name what they sense, but they notice a joy that does not depend on circumstances. May our personal praise breathe new life into our fellowships, so that together we may bless the Lord with all that is within us. Gospel. May we proclaim and embody Your faithful love each day, so that the world may come to believe in Your Son. Amen.

