

How Great the Father's Love

Psalm 103:11

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him.

My wife and I grew up in the country. We were pretty much left up to own devices where day time activity was concerned. As we were remembering those times, we both recalled laying on the ground and doing sky watching. We were fascinated with vastness, movement of the sky and the clouds that at times seemed to go flying by. When we had our first airplane ride we discovered that the rest of the sky was immensely greater and beyond our imagination. I can't get my mind around what those have seen who have gone into space. The psalmist praises the greatness of God's loyal love to those who fear him – it is unlimited, higher than the heavens above.

God's mercy and forgiveness are immeasurable. Who can measure the distance of east from west? Who can measure the height of the sky? God's love will never come to an end. Verse 8 tells us: "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." In Exodus this revelation was given to the nation after the sin of the golden calf – when they needed it the most.

Verse 10 adds: "He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities." Psalm 130:3-4 reinforces this insight when it says: If you, "O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?" and quickly states in verse 4: "But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared." The fear which flows from forgiveness is not dread and terror, but reverence, love and honor for the God who has forgiven us. This is a part of the confession/absolution of Divine Service setting Five.

Verse 12 is a good summary of this love as it goes on to declare: "as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us." God's mercy and forgiveness are immeasurable. Who can measure the distance of east from west? Who can measure the height of the sky? God's love will never come to an end. God's supply of forgiveness will never run out. When God removes sin, he removes it completely. When God forgives sin, he does not bring it up again.

How many times do we need God's forgiveness? It's impossible to count. Day after day, our transgressions should bring His anger. But over and over again, He removes our iniquities. Where are they sent? To the cross, where Jesus takes the anger and gives us compassion instead. (TLSB)

Prayer: "Bless the LORD, O my soul!" (v 1). I thank You for redeeming me from death so that I may join the angelic hosts in praising Your holy name from everlasting to everlasting. Amen. (TLSB)