

The Steadfast Love of the Lord

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Date: 08 October 2017

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[0 : 00] Good morning. It is a joy to be here this morning and it is both a joy and a privilege to be able to present God's word this morning.

! I am so delighted that the Lord has caused me to know Him and indeed has caused all the us who believe to know Him as well. I mean that is enough to shout about. That we know the Creator of the universe because He condescended to us. He chose us not because of any good that we have done but because of His love. His amazing love. He chose us.

The goal of today's message is simple. It's this. To encourage believers to view life's challenges through the lens of God's love.

Let me say it again. The goal of today's message is this. To encourage or to remind believers to view life's challenges through the lens of God's love.

We're not talking about a get-rich-life. We're not talking about a get-rich-game or a seven-step plan to health or how to destroy your enemies or anything like that.

[1 : 55] We are talking about a get-rich-game or anything like that. We are talking about how we are to view life's challenges through the lens of God's love. How we are to look at life's circumstances.

How do you view the events in the lens of God's love. How do you view the events in the world? Things around you and the things in your life. Do you see them the same way a non-believer does? Things around you and the things in your life.

In other words, does your faith inform the things you see? Does it matter? Does your faith matter? Is your faith real?

Is there substance to your faith? I'm trying to get you to focus on your worldview. Your perspective.

[3 : 25] Because perspective matters. Much of the scriptures is focused on helping to frame our perspective so that we see things differently.

A non-believer looks at something and he sees one thing. A believer looks at the same thing and he ought to see something else.

Because of the prism through which he sees the thing. Ultimately, our understanding and embrace of God's love informs the way we view and interact with the world and how we live in it.

If we think God hates us. If we think God hates us. Then we would have much to fear. If we think he is indifferent towards us.

That he just simply doesn't care. We would have much to fear. But knowing that he loves us should positively shape our lives.

[4 : 35] Every aspect of our lives. And if it does not. That truth does not shape every aspect of your life. Then you ought to do introspection.

You ought to stop and think. Why is it that my faith is not alive? Why is it that this love that we sang about this money.

Why is it that it does not change or shape the way I view things? God's steadfast love is the lens through which believers must view blessings and difficulties and everything in between.

You ought to view everything through the lens of God's steadfast love. Let us pray. Father, thank you for the privilege of sharing your word today.

We ask, O Lord, that you would open our eyes so that we might see Christ. We ask, O Lord, that you would give us understanding.

[5 : 48] We ask for the help of your Holy Spirit. We pray, O Lord, that we would receive your word today. We pray, O Lord, that where there is need for adjustment, that our hearts will be adjusted.

We pray, O Lord, that we will leave this place not the same as we came. But rather, Lord, that our faith will be strengthened in you.

And Lord, that those of us who have not to this point looked at our circumstances through the lens of your love, Lord, that we will begin to do so.

In Jesus' name and all God's people say, Amen. Today we want to share from Psalm 86.

And I'm going to ask you to turn to Psalm 86 as I read it. Psalm 86. A prayer of David.

[6 : 58] Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me. For I am poor and needy. Preserve my life, for I am godly.

Save your servant who trusts in you. You are my God. Verse 3. Be gracious to me, O Lord, for to you do I cry all the day.

Gladden the soul of your servant. For to you, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. For you, O Lord, of good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you.

Verse 6. Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer. Listen to the plea for grace. In the day of my trouble, I will call upon you, for you answer me.

There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours. All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name.

[8 : 10] For you are great and do wondrous things. You alone are God. Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth.

Unite my heart to fear your name. I give thanks to you, O Lord, my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever.

For great is your steadfast love toward me. You have delivered my soul from the depths of shore. O God, insolent men have risen up against me.

A band of ruthless men seeks my life. And they do not set you before them. But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

Turn to me and be gracious to me. Give your strength to your servant and save the son of your maidservant. Show me a sign of your favor.

[9 : 21] that those who hate me may see and be put to shame because you, O Lord, have helped me and comforted me.

Psalm 86 is a prayer that David prayed when he found himself in a very difficult situation. As David said, men had risen up against him and were plotting to kill him.

Now, I am doubtful that any of us present today have men who are plotting to kill us physically.

That's not to say that perhaps, perhaps there are some who would wish us harm.

But I am doubtful that there is any present who can say that there are persons plotting to kill them physically. Yet our lives, the truth is that our lives are not a bed of roses, as some might say.

Indeed, heartaches and disappointments are a part of our lives. We constantly deal with difficult situations like the death of a loved one, personal injury, illness, business failure, divorce, injustice, crime, uncertainty, rejection, betrayal, and unemployment, just to name a few.

[10 : 56] And whether we are Christian or not, these things happen. Many of us can relate to the words found in Job 14.1.

Man who is born of a woman is few of days, but full of trouble. Believers are not exempt.

Of course, the trials of life do not exist in isolation by themselves.

For some, they are expressed in various ways, including sleeplessness, grouchiness, not trusting others, withdrawal, sadness, envy, anger, long-term physical and mental deterioration, to name but a few.

But what should be the distinctiveness? What should be the mark of a believer in the face of life's certain challenges?

[12 : 19] What should set us apart? what should make you and me different in the face of all of these challenges that everyone faces?

Here's a hint. The believer should view life's challenges through the lens of God's love.

love. We're going to explore the practical meaning of that simple response by considering the words in Psalm 86 6 in three parts.

Number one, we've got to consider God's, the nature of God's love. The nature of God's love. And then we've got to look at the expressions of God's love.

And finally, the power of God's love. Let's now consider the nature of God's love.

[13 : 27] Books have been written about the nature of God's love. However, we don't intend here to explore this to any great or philosophical degree.

As we read Psalm 86, perhaps you noticed the number of times David mentioned God's love.

In fact, in the 17 short verses in this Psalm, he specifically uses the word love three times. That frequency should suggest to us significance.

these are the verses where the word love was mentioned. Verse number five, verse five. David writes, For you, O Lord, good and forgiving, abounding, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you.

Abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you. And then in verse 13, David writes, For great is your steadfast love toward me.

[14 : 45] Then in verse 15, And abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. Apart from the fact that David mentioned the word love three times, I want you to notice something, what he did.

Notice that he uses two adjectives, abounding, great, and steadfast to describe God's love.

David describes God's love as abounding and steadfast. Here is a man going through tremendous challenges and he is focusing on the love of God.

He is focusing on love. the abounding and the steadfast love of the Lord. What is the Holy Spirit through the inspired writings of David teaching us today?

What's he telling us? When David refers to God's love as abounding, I think he means that it is great. It is without end.

[16 : 00] God's abounding love might be understood better if we consider what it means to have little, a little bit of love and to contemplate love's practical opposite.

You want to understand what abounding love is? Then let's think about it if it were little, if we had a little bit of love. Let's also examine what its opposite is.

If we could measure the depth of God's love, we would be miserable indeed. If you and I were, if we had the capacity to measure the depth of God's love, you and I would be miserable indeed.

If his love were finite, it would mean that he is keeping score of how much we draw from his love well, if you will.

Imagine that. Imagine if God had a well of love and every time you and I did something and he needed to draw from it, imagine if it were finite.

[17 : 14] Imagine if it were able to be run out. The scriptures tell us in Psalm 103 verse 7 that the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him.

Aren't you glad today? It is from everlasting to everlasting. His love is infinite. There is no end to it. I don't know about you, but I find tremendous comfort today in knowing that God's love for me is abounding, is everlasting, is eternal.

That is so because I often find the need to draw from his love. And I am fearful that even if it were for me only, that if his love were finite, I would have used it up already.

You see, the abundance of God's love is not dependent on me, but it's dependent entirely on him. but you get a better appreciation of the abounding characteristic of God's love when we consider its practical opposite, which is indifference.

Practical opposite of God's love is indifference. Indifference is like whatever. Difference means it does not matter one way or the other.

[19 : 00] You're here, good. You're not here, good. You're feeling fine, good. You're not feeling fine, good.

Indifference just does no matter. One cannot get indifference out of abounding. God's love is abounding.

It can't mean that he is also indifferent. God is not indifferent towards you and me. His love is abounding. Abounding suggests that his love is active.

It's not indifferent. God's love propels him to act. He is not a casual observer, unconcerned about our circumstances.

He is not indifferent. God's love is that it is steadfast.

[20 : 05] The word steadfast means resolutely and beautifully firm and unbevory.

resolutely or dutifully firm and unbevory. David reminds us that the Lord's love is resolutely firm and it is unwavering.

The love that David describes in Psalm 86, David refers to it as an abounding and steadfast love. Meaning that it is unwavering.

It's firm. It's resolutely firm. In other words, it is unconditional and will not change. God's love for us is not based on anything we do or say.

That will not change. In other words, it is not performance based. God's love for you and me is not performance based. Aren't you glad today that you don't have to perform for God's love?
[21 : 18] You don't have to perform for it. It is without condition. God's love is without condition. His steadfast love. Now then, we have a picture, a clear picture of God's abounding and steadfast love through which you and I can engage the world we can engage the world through God's bounding and steadfast love.

We can engage our circumstances as we consider our circumstances. We now can see it through this amazing love.

In a moment, we will consider the power of that love. But before we do, I want us to see from Psalm 86 that God's love is manifested in our lives.

So now let's consider point number two, expressions of God's love. By the expressions of God's love, we mean the manifestation manifestation of God's love.

What it looks like. How it is revealed. In other words, what does it look like? What does it produce? That is what I mean.

[22 : 50] This is what I mean. Tell you what I mean a little bit better. You see, if you love me, tell me. And if you love me, really, don't just tell me, show me that you love me.

Right? How many of you can relate to that? Not many. How many of you can relate to that? If you love me, don't just tell me, show me that you love me. Right?

Amen. Have you ever been in a relationship with someone, a spouse, or a child, or a friend, anyone, and you say, I just can't, I just can't feel you.

I just, you know, you can relate to that, right? I just can't, you know. I just can't feel you. You know. Well, David understood that God's love is not like that.

It's tangible. It's full of expression. It's real. You can grab a hold of it. You know it's there. You know it's there.

[23 : 51] As we consider these manifestations of God's love, I want us to remember the context. Let's remember the context now that David's prayer, of the context of David's prayer.

Here is a man who is otherwise challenged by life's circumstances, and now he prays to God with expectation, mindful that God's love is eternal and steadfast.

Look at verse 1, right out of the gate, right out of the gate. Talk about manifestation, expressions of God's love. Right out of the gate, in verse 1, we see that God's love is founded on communication. And all the women say, let me say that again, right out of the gate, in verse 1, we see that God's love is founded on communication, and all the women say, amen.

Amen. And the men say, oh my, I thought the men were going to say, ouch.

[25 : 08] But here's what David expects to be heard. You see, David, while preaching, while praying praying about God's abounding and steadfast love, David has a certain degree of expectation.

And he expects that this love that the Lord has for him will be manifested in various ways. And right out of the gate, he expects that the Lord will hear him because the Lord loves him.

Because his love is abounding, his love is steadfast. So David says, want to be heard. He expects to be heard.

David expects to be heard even perhaps more so when things are difficult. You know there is no substitute for being able to talk with someone who has a listening air when things are difficult.

You know that, right? When things are difficult, there's no substitute being able to talk to someone who has a listening air. When one approaches another whom he loves, he or she loves with transparency, with humility and vulnerability, and finds a listening air, one is comforted.

[26 : 32] Nothing more comforting than that. And you can open up your heart to someone and they listen. And you pour yourself out.

And they're just sitting there listening attentively. But the Lord cares for David beyond just listening. The Lord's care for David includes answering.

David has an expectation that the Lord will not only listen to him, but that the Lord will answer him because of his pounding love.

Pounding and steadfast love. We can take comfort in the fact that during times of difficulty, when you and I cry out to the Lord, he will both listen to us, and he will grant us wisdom wisdom in our circumstances.

He will grant us wisdom. But there is a bonanza of blessings David references in this psalm. And all are derived because of this amazing love of God.

[27 : 51] In verse 2, we see preservation of life. In verse 3, grace is the meat of the downhearted. In verse 4, a gladdened heart for the distressed.

In verse 11, wisdom and holiness are fruits and so is gratitude. Verse 12, and strength in verse 16. And finally in verse 17, to the one who is feeling the weight of a broken world, the Lord gives help and comfort. Truth is time, does not permit me to look deeply into each of these points.

I do want to explore just a few of them if I may. Just a few of them. In verse 4, David prays for a gladdened heart.

Do you see that? Psalm 86, verse 4. Notice that David is not here asking for a 10-step program to happiness.

[28 : 58] or the latest fad. David doesn't ask the Lord for a turn-step program. He asks God to supernaturally intervene and grant him joy, a gladdened heart.

David makes clear in the second part of the verse that he lifts up his soul to the Lord to be gladdened.

He lifts up his soul to the Lord to be gladdened. One sees the imagery of someone holding up a cup and asking the Lord to fill it. David lifts up the cup of his soul and he prays to the Lord and he says, Lord, you alone can gladden my heart.

in times of challenges as in all times we should lift our souls to the Lord.

Him alone, lifted to him alone to be filled with joy. Let's not turn to things that perish, things that take flight, gladden our hearts, but rather to the eternal love of the Lord.

[30 : 23] You ought to give me a hallelujah here, something, an amen, something. I'm telling you now that we can lift up the cups of our souls to the Lord to be filled by him.

What treasure we have today. That's why as we sang today those beautiful songs about the love of God, our souls were being washed, our souls were being filled with joy supernaturally as we were drawing closer to the Lord.

He was drawing closer to us. In times of difficulty, we can lift up the cups of our souls to the Lord, to be filled by him.

In verse 11, verse 11 is most instructive. Listen to what it says. David says, teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth.

And then he writes the second part of this verse. Unite my heart to fear your name. Those are the words of one who is humble, whose heart is postured to hear from God so that his actions might be adjusted.

[31 : 52] Do you see that? David says, teach me your way, O Lord, that I might walk in your truth. So David here asks the Lord during the time of difficulty that he is in.

He said, adjust my actions so that I might walk right. David not only prays for his walk to be adjusted though, and I want you to see this, he prays that his walk be adjusted, but he also asks the Lord to unite his heart to fear his name.

David is asking the Lord to realign his heart also. Why is that important? You and I know that very often we can know what is right, and even sometimes do what is right, often do what is right, but find little pleasure in it.

Do what is the right thing to do, but find little pleasure in it. David here asks that our loving Lord would not only adjust his walk, but would adjust his heart.

Lord, make the walk of holiness sweet to me. Make forgiveness of the one who wronged me a delight to me.

[33 : 15] Cause my heart to leap for joy as I turn the other cheek to the one who scolds me. Affect me so that I pray earnestly!

for the granting of salvation and success to the one who, but for your grace I would despise. And then finally in this section we observe in verse 17 that David has expectation that the Lord's love will be expressed in his ultimate comfort and help.

yes the Lord is our comfort in the time of trouble. He is our refuge and strength a very present help in the time of trouble.

I need to continue what the psalmist says in verses 2 and 3 of Psalm 46 to highlight this point. The psalmist goes on to say, therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way though the mountains be moved into the sea though its waters roar and foam though the mountains tremble at its

swelling.

The Lord he is our deliverer. He is comfort and our health.

[34 : 59] Now we come to a very important element of the Lord's love. Finally the power of God's love.

The power of God's love. Let me tell you something. You know it's one thing to know the nature of the Lord's love and even the intent of his love.

But if he has no power then his love is of little use in the circumstances of our pain and suffering. I'm saying you hear what I'm saying I'm saying you know God could have he could have all the good intentions.

love us but if he has no power it's useless. Consider this example. Consider our minor children. They love us dearly as we love them and no doubt they desire that we do well. However their love will not translate into good health or overcoming financial distress for example because they just don't have the power.

[36 : 10] they just don't. But David amplifies the fact that one whose love is abounding and steadfast and whose intentions are favorable is uniquely qualified to cause those desirable things to be realized in our lives.

Listen to what David writes in verses 8 and 9 of Psalm 86. There is none like you among the gods David says.

Oh Lord nor are there any works like yours. All nations you have made shall come and worship before you and shall glorify your name.

There is none like you among the gods nor are there any works like yours. All nations you have made shall come and worship before you and shall glorify your name.

There is none like the God who loves us. There is none like the God who loves you and me today. There is no God as powerful as he.

[37 : 37] Everything is within the scope of his power. Indeed he made the nations of the universe and everyone and everything will be subjected to him.

Notice it's all for his glory. It's all for his glory. All for his glory. In the midst of David's trial plans of the Lord could not be for it.

It makes it made sense therefore for him to engage the Lord. David's reasoning meant something like this.

I'm in trouble. God loves me no matter what. I'll take my concerns to him. I am certain he will hear me and he will do whatever pleases him.

what reasoning what sound reasoning. I'm a man in trouble number one. Number two God loves me no matter what.

[38 : 39] Number three I'll take my concerns to him. Number four I'm certain he will hear me. And number five he will do whatever pleases him.

He's all powerful. There is none like him. nor are there any works like yours.

With such clarity of and confidence in God's love believers should be able to rest. You and I should be able to rest. When we see through the prism of God's love and his power we can take all of our burdens to the Lord and leave them there.

When you and I see through the prism of God's love we can take all of our burdens to the Lord and leave them there.

Yes leave it there. Charles A. Tindley the son of an African American who was regarded by his society at the time to be a slave he wrote the song Leave it there.

[39 : 57] Having no formal education history recognizes him as one of the most eloquent preachers and hymnologists of his day.

Listen to the words of this popular and timeless song Mr. Tindley wrote in 1906. Listen firstly as he deals with financial challenges.

this is what he wrote if the world from you withhold of its silver and its gold and you have to get along with meager fear just remember in this world how he feeds the little birds take your burdens! to the Lord and leave it there. In the next verse he addresses sickness if your body suffers pain and your health you can't regain and your soul is almost sinking in despair Jesus knows the pain you feel he can save and he can heal take your burden to the Lord and leave it there and then should you have enemies this is what he wrote when your enemy is a sail and your heart begins to fail don't forget that God in heaven answers prayer he will make a way for you and will lead you safely

through take your burden to the

Lord and leave it there and then perhaps because of age there is physical decline or some other circumstances and to you he would commend these words when your youthful days are gone and old age is stealing on and your body bends beneath the weight of care he will never leave you there he'll go with you to the end take your burden to the Lord and leave it there leave it there as we conclude this morning we might sum up the message this way because of

[42 : 51] God's everlasting and steadfast love we can face every situation pleasant and unpleasant with the confidence that God's plans will come to fruition allow God's love to inform your responses to life's challenges but in the end in the end we can't end without being reminded of the greatest expression of God's love we were once his enemies and without hope and he demonstrated his love for us in that while we were sinners he sent his son to die for us and so today we have joy beyond words because he demonstrated unfathomable love for us in sending his son to die for us but ask the praise team to come up

Thank you.