

His Mercy Endureth Forever Part 1 of 2

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[0 : 00] Let's get the Psalm 136 together as we continue. We won't make our way all the way through the Psalm tonight. Lord willing, we'll continue on a Sunday night. Glad to see all of you here.

Not all of you traveled all the way from South Africa or India, but you might have traveled on Highway 400, and that's a trip in and of itself. But you went out of your way to be here tonight, and I'm grateful for it.

I look forward to seeing you all day long, just waiting for the evening service, gathering God's Word, the encouragement that we have. We also have Clark Hall here with us tonight. He didn't get mentioned, so I'll make mention of him, all right?

And he's too big. I'm afraid to disrespect him, all right? I'm just going to say that he's here, and everybody's showing up for this great wedding, and I'm really looking forward to it. We didn't start off as a family church, but we're probably going to end as a family church by the time Jesus returns, all right?

This is one big family. We'll go up to heaven together. And I'm glad, and Chase and Ashley, I'm thankful to see you. Maybe if I'm praying for you, I know we're going to blame it on Luke and laugh right now, and that's a good idea, but I do know that you're both hurting and trusting the Lord.

[1 : 08] We trust the Lord with you. We pray. There's no doubt this church knows your heart is to be there and among the work, and if you'll do everything possible, and God will make a way or He'll make His path clear to you.

And so we're trusting the Lord with you, all right? But we're thankful for every chance we get to see you. And wisdom, I've been trying to get wisdom here. We've been talking a little bit back and forth.

I've been trying to steal him away from Liberty for some years, try to get him. I wrote him one time, tried to get you kicked out of college so you had to come here, but they said you had too good of a testimony there. And I really thank God for the testimony he shared, and you do pray for us.

He knows, he's seen, he's spent some time here, he understands that we're in a unique place in America here in Alpharetta with an opportunity to reach an Indian community.

And friends like him have been a blessing to us through the years in encouraging us in that. Psalm 136, it's called a halal psalm. I don't know if you have that word, halal.

[2 : 09] I'll say it different every time that I do. I'll make sure if you think I'm saying it wrong, wait a second, I'll say it right once tonight, all right? Halal, sometimes you remember where you're at when you learn a word for the first time.

I think Mark and I were probably together at Clarkston. We were about to feed a bunch of kids some hot dogs, and a Muslim mom came over and said, are these halal hot dogs?

I'm like, no, they're probably ballpark hot dogs. What she was asking was, are these permissible hot dogs? Can we be feeding them to those Muslim kids? Knowing us, they were probably the cheapest thing they had at the grocery store, which means that they weren't, that they weren't halal.

With that's, in Arabic, that's a word that means permissible. And then linguists argue, and I'm not one of those, if there's a connection between this word here in Hebrew and that Arabic word, which means permissible, the Hebrew word, it speaks about being a song of praise.

That's what we have here. It's not a permissible song. It is a song of praise. It doesn't have the word hallelujah in it, but it's a great halal for the way that it rehearses the goodness of God in regard to His people and encourages us to praise Him because He is merciful, which means that He is kind and loyal and promise-keeping, and we should rejoice.

[3 : 27] That's what the Cook sisters did for us a second ago. They said, church family, let's praise the Lord because He took our place. And they highlighted the great truth that changed our lives in the gospel.

And in this psalm, we see different things that we are told, because of this, He is Lord, let's praise His merceness forever. Because He is good, His merceness forever.

And it lists 26 different reasons that we should rejoice in the fact that He is merciful and kind to us. And that's why we won't get to all of them tonight. Before I read the psalm, Ezra chapter number 3, verse 11, turn there, they'll put it on the screen here for you.

But I want to show you that we're in a great tradition where there's a responsive reading. That's what I'm going to ask here for in a moment, where one person would sing one part of the song and another person would sing another part of the song.

Me and Stephanie do this all the time. We make up songs all the time. Neither one of us, I think, know all the words to any song, even though we've both been in church a long time. They know the words to the song. The Levite or the priest, he would call out and give a reason to God, and then they would respond for His mercy endureth forever.

[4 : 37] So here in Ezra 3.11, so many times tonight, we're going to get to this phrase, for His mercy endureth forever. All right? That's your job tonight. All right? Anytime you see it in a psalm, that's your job.

I'll take the rest. All right? But we'll work on this together. So in Ezra 3.11, it speaks about, and they sang together by course, the praising and giving thanks to the Lord. This singing together by course, that's what they mean, responsibly.

They all sang together, going back and forth. Mishida told us last week that praise the Lord, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, praise you the Lord, was one of our favorite songs. All right? We're going to bust it out someday on a Sunday morning.

All right? We'll just hold now. We're going to need to practice it a few more times. And so this tells us all the way back in Ezra it's happening, and I'm going to show you more times in the Bible where you see a group of people responding to the Lord.

It ought to become part of our vocabulary. Saying this in some manner ought to be some part of our vocabulary as a gathered people and also as parking lot people, as meeting over lunch people.

[5 : 42] This ought to be part of our way we speak to each other. So giving thanks unto the Lord because He is good. For it is true forever. Good job, Ty Pepperdine. Appreciate you.

All right? Toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord because the fountain of the house of the Lord was laid. And so here in the middle of a construction project, it's said to them and they respond to it.

This sentence is used several times in the Old Testament. 1 Chronicles 16, this phrase is being used as they would sing early in the morning and in the evening. 1 Chronicles 16, 41.

In the assignment of the priest in David's day, and with them him and Judith and the rest that were chosen, who were expressed by name to give thanks to the Lord because... His mercy is truly forever.

And then in Israel's praise at the dedication of the temple. 2 Chronicles is just wonderful. It's a really... In the workplace, it would be a great chapter to read because it's somebody who is focusing his life on what is most important.

[6 : 47] And he came even in the past as the trumpeters and singers were as one to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord. And when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments and music, Meshida was there that night.

All right? And praised the Lord, saying, For he is good. For his mercy endures forever. That when the house was filled with the cloud, even the house of the Lord. And then one more time before we get into the psalm.

In the record of the Lord's victory over the Ammonites, they would praise the Lord. 2 Chronicles 20, 21. And when they consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord that should praise the beauty of holiness.

And they went out before the army and to say, Praise the Lord. For his mercy endures forever. All right. This declaration that God's mercy never ends is always given by his people.

It's been seen through scripture and it certainly shouldn't stop with us. We should be people that say it. Tonight we'll look at the first nine verses together and then Lord willing on Sunday night we will continue.

[7 : 50] Tonight's focus of what would cause us to respond for his mercy endures forever has to do with his testimony towards us through creation and nature. And we're constantly surrounded by opportunities to look up and say, He is so good to us.

He is so merciful to us. So I'm going to read my part and you're going to do your part, okay? Could you all help out Todd Pepperdine? He's just really, he's all alone in this, all right? Let's give it our very best. Clear your throat.

We get ready for this, okay? Oh, give thanks unto the Lord for he is good. For his mercy endures forever. Oh, give thanks unto the God of gods. For his mercy endures forever.

Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords. For his mercy endures forever. To him alone doeth great wonders. For his mercy endures forever. To him that by wisdom made the heavens.

For his mercy endures forever. To him that stretched out the earth above the waters. For his mercy endures forever. To him that made great lights. For his mercy endures forever.

[8 : 49] The sun to roll by day. The moon and stars to roll by night. Heavenly Father, I pray that you will be with your people tonight, Lord, as we will respond to your word, as we see the sacred, wonderful tradition of your people shouting and praising your goodness.

Father, may we do it in our own time and context and in our work and in the words in which you have given us, but in some form or fashion, Lord, may we be a people that spend our days saying that you are good and that you have been kind and merciful towards us.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. So the first nine verses I told you speaks about his mercy or kindness shown towards us in creation. And then the middle section, most of the 10 through verse 25 will speak about the great deliverance of his people in two different scenarios.

And then it ends in verse number 26 with an expression of gratitude. It starts with telling us you need to be saying thank you to the Lord for this. And it ends with the same thing. Let's look at the first three verses, though.

There's something for us to learn here. We're going to see here about giving thanks unto the Lord. First of all, verse number one, it says give thanks unto the Lord. In your Bible, those should be capital.

[10 : 10] All the letters are probably all capital. Capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D. This is Yahweh or Jehovah. This is our Creator God. And then give thanks unto the God of gods, Elohim, the one of power and of strength.

The Lord. And then lastly, verse 3, and give thanks to the Lord of lords, Adonai, the title that he is the sovereign one. He oversees things. He is so good and so merciful that three different ways we say his name, these first three verses, emphasizing different aspects of him.

That's where we should live our days, is considering God and his goodness. The other morning I came in, it was just really pouring down. Seems how it rains these days. It's just all or nothing, right?

And Greg was outside of the kitchen here, and he's never too far from the kitchen. Grace knows that about him, right? I think he just walks by it periodically, see if anything's going on. And he was outside the kitchen.

It was just pouring down raining, and he was just there with his coffee cup like an old man, all right? Just staring at the rain. And I walked, and I'm like, so what are you doing? And he's just like, isn't it so beautiful?

[11 : 18] No, he didn't say that. He said, it's just, but he told me he was having a moment, and I ruined it, all right? He just said, it's just so sobering, you know? It's just so amazing, because you can't create any size storm.

None of you can. All of you together. Get everybody you know. You can't do it, all right? And God was bringing in a thunderstorm, and just the recognition of God, and seeing him.

There's the creator. There's the powerful one. There's the one with all the strength in all the world. He's doing that thing. That's how you're supposed to interpret a storm. That's what you're supposed to do in it.

And so, for he is good. That's the thing that we're told. Thanks unto the Lord, for he is good. It's just four words, but it changes everything in all the world. The fact that you know that the Lord is good, it's the most fundamental thing that we know about him, the most fundamental truth.

If I was asking you, the Lord, is he loving you? You'd say, yes, Sir John 4, Wright taught us that. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love. The fact that God is loving is an expression of his goodness.

[12 : 24] He's not good because he's loving, but he's loving because he is good. He is right. Charles Spurgeon says it like this, He is good beyond all others. Indeed, he alone is good in the highest sense.

He is the source of good, the good of all good, the sustainer of good, the perfecter of good, and the rewarder of good. For this, he deserves the constant gratitude of his people.

Our God is good, and there's no shadow or variable about it. Every time you will ever find him, he is good. Never going to find him on a bad day. You're never going to find a circumstance in which he wasn't prepared for him.

He is always good, and we are blessed to have an understanding of good because we were made in the image of God according to Genesis chapter number one. We were made in his image.

Even though we're fallen, and our knowledge of good has been corrupted, and because of this, we live in a world that is now fallen, but we can recognize goodness.

[13 : 24] And so, even those people who question God's goodness, they do so according to some standard of what good and evil are. Because without him, you would have no understanding of it.

So the very existence, that standard connects them to something that's beyond themselves, back to a creator who made them in his image. God is bad. What is good? What is bad?

Who determines that? There's an instance. It's not an argument, but you could see why everybody would argue. And we'll see this more in Titus, where it says that he is the servant of the Lord, acknowledging the truth, is that if you accept that there's truth, then you accept that God is the one who determines right and wrong.

And you could see why people fight that so very much. But God gave us the ability to know that he is good. And then, so we move on from there. He is the Lord, God of gods, Lord of lords.

He is good. And then his mercy endure forever. And that's their refrain that we could say many times. I usually think in these terms, I don't know what's taught to me as a little kid, grace is getting better than you deserve, or God's riches at Christ's expense.

[14 : 34] I think that's the acrostic that is given there. And so that's the definition of grace. But then mercy, I was always taught, is not getting what you deserve. So grace is getting better than you deserve, and mercy is not getting what you deserve.

And there's certainly, that is found to be in that word. I've shared with you before how I always thought it was always so intense when people in prayer requests would say, pray for traveling mercy.

We deserve to die, but pray that we don't. I'm like, wow, that's really intense. All right? That's the only way I could process this idea of mercy. Pray for us as we deserve something. Pray that we don't get it.

All right? I'm like, can we pray for traveling grace? It just sounds, it's a little less intense, you know? Like, there'll be snacks if you pray for traveling grace, traveling mercy. You just get there without dying, you know?

So that's what I'm asking that we all use from here on out. All right? We are the church that prays for traveling grace as we go through life. But this word, and you've heard me use the word mercy when I've been describing mercy, because I'll say because of his mercy and kindness, because what I'm trying to do is I'm trying to bring in our current understanding of the word mercy, which is good, and I also want to make sure it isn't left just there and add to it loyalty and love and a commitment that he has to it.

[15 : 47] It's just the most wonderful thing in all the world. Chris Fees now has a daughter named Hesed, and that's her name, which is this word for mercy. And it's a covenant love.

It's a loyal love. It is a kindness that God is showing us. So that's what we're talking about. We're saying that creation is showing us God's kindness to us.

And I'm not just talking about when the softball team gets rained out, Brian. That's God's kindness to your knees, isn't it? All right? We're talking about in other ways that God's kindness is shown to us through nature.

And we will look at this. Oh, I forgot to bring it. It's on my desk, all right? It's a little red book. And Ben and Kristen brought it back to me from the same conference, all right? They went to that great conference church, sent our appreciation for their ministry, mostly Kristen, but she wanted to take Ben with them.

And so we agreed to that. And they brought me back a classic devotional book. And in this book, I read a devotion this week by George Washington Carver. If you don't know who he is, you need to know.

[16 : 47] You need to teach your kids. But in his devotion, he gave three things. I'll give two of them to you real quickly. Speaking about his love for the Lord. First off, he said, First, nature in its varied forms are the little windows through which God permits me to commune with him and to see much of his glory, majesty, and power by simply lifting the curtain and looking in.

Nature is a little curtain in which I could see God's glory and majesty and power. Hey, Broughton, would you mind showing that picture? I put a picture in at the top of the verses. I took it of the kids outside, all right?

You guys don't even seem to know this. Jeff Bush may know. But around that tree, it's a lot of worms, all right? How many of you picked up a few worms? Noah, do you have any in your pocket? Tell me. Empty them out. Did you pick up any worms before you came in?

And then Barry taught them that if you take a cup of soapy water and you pour it on the ground, the worms will come up because they got to breathe, I guess, all right? And that's what he was showing them.

But those little ones over there, they didn't realize it, but they were opening up a little window to the power and majesty and glory of our God. They were just seeing the most incredible thing in all of the world, which is God's creation, something that man can't make, something man can't do.

[18 : 06] So our job as parents to let kids eat dirt and play with worms, but it's also our job to tell them, do you see that this is a window to recognize there is an all-powerful God that has made this?

Second thing here, I love to think of nature as an unlimited broadcasting stations, though which God speaks to us every day, every hour, at every moment of our lives.

He will only tune in and remain so. That is a broadcasting station. You're going down the road, the radio's not working, you don't think you can hear anything, nature is broadcasting the goodness of God.

Just watch it and see it. And so he went on to say, begin now to study the little things in your own dooryard, going from known to the nearest related unknown, for indeed, each new truth brings one nearer to God.

One of the great tragedies of our generation, some of you would put yourself in my generation, all right? One of the great things that has taken away from us is that many people, Jonathan Edwards wrote a whole book about spiders.

[19 : 15] He just studied it like crazy and he knew all about it and the webs and how God did it and then other people studied. William Carey, great missionary, was a great botanist. He grew all kinds of things in his backyard.

We've replaced knowing all these incredible things about God's creation with memes and YouTube and cat videos and just whatever is convenient for us.

Just like food takes time to cook and prepare, so does consuming things in life. If you just grab whatever is available to you, it's not going to do what generations before us did, which was study things about what God has done.

Christians were more well-rounded in their education. They studied more deeply. They knew things about God. They could have conversations and let's be counterculture on that, okay?

Starting now, right now, all right? We're going to decide to be counterculture that we're going to know things about this that our kids would never think, oh, biology and science, that's boring. My mom and dad never liked that.

[20 : 15] They might know that we weren't good at it, you can be honest, okay? But they should never think that we'd find anything about those things that pertain to God as boring to us.

Creation alone leaves us wondering, but in light of the gospel, it leaves us worshipping our creator. We speak about creation, we always get to the side, we get back to Romans 1.19 which says, that which may be known of God is manifest in them and it's in invisible things of creation of the world that are being clearly seen.

And since God is a spirit, John 4.24, all his qualities are invisible to physicalize and can be understood by the human mind only as they're reflected or seen in God's creative work.

So this God, our creator, who made creation of the world has invisible qualities that are true about him but they're seen through the visible things.

And so the witness to God in nature is so clear and constant that ignoring it leaves you without any defense that you cannot say that you don't believe there's, you are without excuse, the Bible would say, because of the testimony in front of you.

[21 : 22] And I typically use that in a negative manner. I would say that unbelievers should be able to look at creation and be without excuse that there is a God.

Well, let's not stop there. Believing people should not be able to look at creation and not pause and say, His mercy endureth forever. When we complain and just get so focused on the things that aren't supposed to be focused on, we have a broadcasting station.

We have little windows into who God is. We have something that is testifying that is trying to say, pay attention to what God has done. The third point George Washington Carver made was this, I am more and more convinced as I search for truth that no student of nature can behold the lilies of the field or look into the hills or study even the microscopic wonders of stagnant pool of water and honestly declare himself to be an infidel.

That nobody should be able honestly to say, I do no longer believe there is a God. There is too much evidence that He is. All right. Pastor Bo, you know how you said this is a one and two part series?

Could you make this a one and three part series? All right. I see we're not getting done tonight. Let's look at verse number five here. To him that by wisdom made the heavens for his mercy endureth forever.

[22 : 46] I want to look at this with our remaining time here. This thought, the wisdom of heaven. The context flows from the Psalms demonstrates that the psalmist, the Holy Spirit, believed that Genesis 1 really happened just like the other events.

It lists Genesis 1 happening just like it does the Exodus. It wouldn't make sense to treat something that one is poetry and genre and it's not literal and put it right beside something that was historical and literal.

But the psalmist treats Genesis 1 as a historical event and he speaks about the wisdom of heaven. A book called The Orbs of Heaven which I've never read but Charles Spurgeon quotes quite often.

He says this, There are no iron tracks with bar and bolts that hold the planets in their orbits. Freely in space they move every changing but never changed.

Poised and bouncing swaying and swayed disturbing and disturbed onward they fly fulfilling with unerring certainty their mighty circles. The entire system forms one grand complicated piece of celestial machinery.

[23 : 53] Circle within circle wheel within wheel cycle within cycle. I don't speak like this alright? I might grow a beard like Charles Spurgeon but I can't talk like him alright?

I don't speak like that but my kids should have my kids and those that I'm around should hear us trying to communicate the wonder of the universe. It's just amazing isn't it?

I think about Lion King alright? Simone and Puma underneath the stars you know Jeff? They're just looking at the stars trying to figure out what it is but we know what it is and we should talk about it and we should talk about how it was created by the God of heaven and that it is the wonder it is amazing to see and then verses 6-9 speaks of the four days of creation to him that stretched out the earth above the waters for his mercy endureth forever to him that made great lights for his mercy oh this is your job alright?

you're slacking here verse 7 to him that made great lights for his mercy endureth forever the sun to rule by day for his mercy endureth forever the moon and stars to rule by night for his mercy endureth forever so each one of those expressions are a never ending testimony of God's mercy and kindness and love towards his people and we can say that God created heavens and earth he had us in mind he made the world in which he would sustain and take care of us Paul teaches the same to the Gentiles in Acts 14 17 Acts 14 17 nevertheless he left not himself without witness in that he did good and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons filling our hearts with food and gladness I believe I'll end with that verse tonight nevertheless Chase and Ashley it's a trying time for you nevertheless Noah heard your prayer request nevertheless every one of you in here that you wonder sometimes is God good is he being good to you is life good he did not leave himself without a witness he did good and he gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons and filling our hearts with food and gladness look at it

I understand there could be a great overemphasis on nature that is where the culture wants to take us away wants to separate nature from a creator but as God's people we're not going to allow that it's going to testify and we see it and so let us say that his mercy endureth forever as you go out as you wake up in the morning as you see the sunrise or you see it set or whatever you get an opportunity look for it like what George Watson Carver said little windows right into the power mighty of God it's broadcasting at all times let me end with verse number one and you can respond back here too with me before I pray oh give thanks unto the Lord for he is good heavenly father I thank you for being with people tonight that know that you are good and your mercy endureth forever I need them Lord in my life to give a testimony to that at times when I am tired and when my head is down and when I wonder they walk into my life Lord and they tell me that your mercy endureth forever and I thank you for that but there's many times where they're not around and I'm all alone and it might be at the end of the night where there was no sleep may every one of us in here Lord see nature that testify of your goodness you have made the rain and it has produced the food and it has fed us and it has taken care of us we see through nature that you do what we cannot do that you can take care of us in a way that we could not take care of ourselves and father of the night we say we are humbled and that you are good and that your mercy endureth forever and it has been redesigned over and it has to be true to myself and it has been remembered but for oh S*** it has to be what it takes to be or to have installed another

[28 : 08] MLB certificate statement it has to be or it has to be a download before you and you