

Sermon No. 417

GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD, FOR HE IS GOOD

"Essentially He is goodness itself, all that He does is good, relatively He is good to His creatures. Let us thank Him that we have seen, proved, and tasted that He is good. 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" C.H. Spurgeon

Psalm 136

Introduction

Q. How are we to worship GOD?

Q. How do we give Him the praise that He deserves

- GOD is worthy to be worshipped . . . but just how should we worship?
- Well, it may not be *what we do* . . . so much as where our heart is!
- The psalms are helpful
 - They were the chief worship vehicles in the OT and NT
 - They reflect the *attitude* of worship
 - And in every cases the psalmist's *heart is clearly evident*:
 - Ω Love
 - Ω Adoration
 - Ω Thankfulness
 - Ω Appreciation
 - Ω Dependence
 - None more so that PRAISE PSALMS
 - The praise psalms are 135-150
 - LORD, help me to see through the psalms the attitude of worship and praise you desire in me
- One standout psalm of praise . . . is Psalm 136

Psalm 136 [play YOUTUBE Discover the Word reading]

- ¹ Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for *He is good!*
For His mercy endures forever.
- ² Oh, give thanks to the God of gods!
For His mercy endures forever.
- ³ Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords!
For His mercy endures forever:
- ⁴ To Him who alone does great wonders,
For His mercy endures forever;
- ⁵ To Him who by wisdom made the heavens,
For His mercy endures forever;
- ⁶ To Him who laid out the earth above the waters,
For His mercy endures forever;
- ⁷ To Him who made great lights,
For His mercy endures forever—
- ⁸ The sun to rule by day,
For His mercy endures forever;
- ⁹ The moon and stars to rule by night,
For His mercy endures forever.
- ¹⁰ To Him who struck Egypt in their firstborn,
For His mercy endures forever;
- ¹¹ And brought out Israel from among them,
For His mercy endures forever;
- ¹² With a strong hand, and with an outstretched arm,
For His mercy endures forever;
- ¹³ To Him who divided the Red Sea in two,
For His mercy endures forever;
- ¹⁴ And made Israel pass through the midst of it,
For His mercy endures forever;
- ¹⁵ But overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea,
For His mercy endures forever;
- ¹⁶ To Him who led His people through the wilderness,
For His mercy endures forever;
- ¹⁷ To Him who struck down great kings,
For His mercy endures forever;
- ¹⁸ And slew famous kings,
For His mercy endures forever—
- ¹⁹ Sihon king of the Amorites,

For His mercy endures forever;
²⁰ And Og king of Bashan,
 For His mercy endures forever—
²¹ And gave their land as a heritage,
 For His mercy endures forever;
²² A heritage to Israel His servant,
 For His mercy endures forever.
²³ Who remembered us in our lowly state,
 For His mercy endures forever;
²⁴ And rescued us from our enemies,
 For His mercy endures forever;
²⁵ Who gives food to all flesh,
 For His mercy endures forever.
²⁶ Oh, give thanks to the God of heaven!
 For His mercy endures forever.

Psalm 136

In Hebrew = the 'Great Psalm of Praise'

- It contains nothing but praise
- It clearly comes from a 'grateful heart'
- 'It is tuned to rapture, and can only be fully enjoyed by a devoutly grateful heart'

Primarily, this psalm

1. Provides one KEY reason why we ought to THANK GOD
2. Recounts GOD's past provision
 - Creation
 - Exodus
 - Promised Land
 - Protection
 - Provision
3. Reminds the listener GOD does what He does because He loves us

Clearly we don't deserve His love – but it is BY HIS GRACE are we saved

His love is an act of MERCY

The psalm is simple in its construction

- Like all the hymns with a solid, simple chorus . . . they become favorites . . . psalm 136 was sure to have been a favorite

The psalm was probably composed by David

- Many believe that he gave it to the Levites to sing every day

1 Chronicles 16:37-41

^{NLT 37} David arranged for Asaph and his fellow Levites to serve regularly before the Ark of the Lord's Covenant, doing whatever needed to be done each day. ³⁸ This group included Obed-edom (son of Jeduthun), Hosah, and sixty-eight other Levites as gatekeepers. ³⁹ Meanwhile, David stationed Zadok the priest and his fellow priests at the Tabernacle of the Lord at the place of worship in Gibeon, where they continued to minister before the Lord. ⁴⁰ They sacrificed the regular burnt offerings to the Lord each morning and evening on the altar set aside for that purpose, obeying everything written in the Law of the Lord, as He had commanded Israel. ⁴¹ David also appointed Heman, Jeduthun, and the others chosen by name to give thanks to the Lord, for "His faithful love endures forever."

- Solomon also seemed to follow David's example

2 Chronicles 7:1-3

^{NLT 1} When Solomon finished praying, fire flashed down from heaven and burned up the burnt offerings and sacrifices, and the glorious presence of the Lord filled the Temple. ² The priests could not enter the Temple of the Lord because the glorious presence of the Lord filled it. ³ When all the people of Israel saw the fire coming down and the glorious presence of the Lord filling the Temple, they fell face down on the ground and worshiped and praised the Lord, saying, "He is good! His faithful love endures forever!"

The psalmist's attitude of praise

1. Firstly, the psalm begins with . . .

¹ Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for *He is good!*
For His mercy endures forever

This verse sets the tone for the entire psalm . . . because it gives the overall answer to the question – why we praise GOD

Why we are so grateful to GOD

That is . . . for He is GOOD

There is an echo of this psalm in Deuteronomy 10:17

NLT 17 "For the Lord your GOD is the GOD of gods and LORD of lords. He is the great GOD, the mighty and awesome GOD, who shows no partiality and cannot be bribed

GOD alone is good in the highest sense

"Essentially He is goodness itself, all that He does is good, relatively He is good to His creatures. Let us thank Him that we have seen, proved, and tasted that He is good. 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" C.H. Spurgeon

Imagine that . . . GOD is . . .

- The source of good
- The sustainer of good
- The rewarder of good

GOD reveals His goodness in everything . . . in . . .

- Creation
- Salvation
- Mercy

2. Secondly, GOD's goodness is proven in His mercy

For His mercy endures forever

NKJV/KJV	His mercy
NIV	His love
NLT	His faithful love
ESV	His steadfast love
NASB	His lovingkindness

Hebrew	Chesed
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That is a word reserved for GOD . . .

It is the only word that can describe the extent of GOD's love for mankind – GOD's special relationship with His children

It is 'covenant love'

For the Jews it is highly valued – it is a virtue of its own

What joy that there is in the lovingkindness of GOD

3. Thirdly, His love and mercy is endless

- This is why the psalmist says it endures forever
- GOD is a GOD of His Word

Here is the thing about GOD's lovingkindness

- We are ever needing it
- We are ever receiving it
- We ought to be ever praying for it
- We ought to be ever thankful for it

4. Fourthly, He proved all this by His past actions

What about us?

Yes, we can rejoice in the Creation

Yes, we can see how GOD provided for Israel

But can we make this more personal?

YES, we can write our own GREAT PSALM OF PRAISE

Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for *He is good*! For His mercy endures forever.

To Him who . . .

Provided

- At a time when I was down
- At a time when I had nothing

Protected

- At a time when I was vulnerable
- At a time when I so badly needed His protection

Prompted

- I recall the time He prompted (encouraged) me to . . .

Positioned

- He brought me to this place
- He placed me here to do His will

Patterned

- He set the pattern for my life

Q. How are we to worship GOD?

Genuinely from the Heart

With a Heart of gratitude for all that He is to us

Most importantly grateful for His lovingkindness and mercy

Worship should be full of praise