

His Love
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Psalm 136:1-5, 10-15, 23-26

Before we study this Psalm, or even read it through, I want you to look at it on the page. **What stands out about the structure and format of this Psalm? Why do you think the psalmist wrote it this way?**

We generally consider it a bad thing when we repeat ourselves. We've seen it in our parents and grandparents, and even at our age we sometimes have that fear: *"Have I already told this friend this same story before?"*

There's another bad trait some people have. We will sometimes hear two people in a dispute and Susan will say: *"Uh, oh. Now he/she is getting 'historical.'"* **What does that expression mean?**

This morning we're going to see that bringing up the past and repeating yourself isn't ALWAYS a bad thing.

Big Idea: God's love and mercy are unchanging and our thankfulness should be UNCEASING. When it comes to remembering God's love, it's okay to bring up the past and repeat yourself. In fact, it's essential!

Let's begin with verses 1–5 of Psalm 136 (ESV)

His Steadfast Love Endures Forever

136 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

² Give thanks to the God of gods,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

³ Give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

⁴ to him who alone does great wonders,

for his steadfast love endures forever;

⁵ to him who by understanding made the heavens,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

- We don't know who wrote this Psalm but we know they wrote a great one!
- As we already observed, its structure is unlike any other Psalm.
- It was written to be sung by two choirs.
- Choir one would sing the verse then choir two would respond with the same chorus: "...for his steadfast love endures forever."
- The \$10 term for this 'repeat and respond' worship song is: antiphonal (an-tiff-uh-null.) In the modern church we've read scripture this way. **What do we call this?**
- **Some people may get bored with repeating the same line over and over, but why is it beneficial?**
- **What line does the psalmist repeat over and over?**
- Verse one: "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, [then the repeating line] for his steadfast love endures forever." (ESV says "steadfast love")
- **What does your translation say endures forever?** We're back to an important Hebrew word we've seen before: CHESED (hess-ed)
- This word is used 245 times in the Old Testament; 127 of them in Psalms.
- ... *chesed* can sometimes refer to kindness or mercy. It can also refer to faithfulness or loyalty. Most often it is translated as "steadfast love."¹
- Look at verses one through five. **What do they say about our God?**
- A truth worth remembering and repeating: Our God is awesome, and powerful, best of all His love and mercy for His children never ends!
- The writer proves it with historical facts. Verses ten through fifteen.

¹⁰ to him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt,

for his steadfast love endures forever;

¹¹ and brought Israel out from among them,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

¹² with a strong hand and an outstretched arm,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

¹³ to him who divided the Red Sea in two,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

¹⁴ and made Israel pass through the midst of it,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

¹⁵ but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

- **Why was remembering their ancestors' escape (exodus) from Egypt a big deal to Jewish people [then and now]?**
- **What parallel to Passover do we gentile followers of Christ have?**
- Let me tell you about another Jewish "deliverance" story (2 Chron. 20)
- When Israel was divided into two kingdoms, north and south, Israel and Judah, one of the kings of Judah was named Jehoshaphat.
- Basically, Jehoshaphat was a good and godly king.

2 Chronicles 17:3–6 (ESV)

3 The LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the earlier ways of his father David. He did not seek the Baals, 4 but sought the God of his father and walked in his commandments, and not according to the practices of Israel. 5 Therefore the LORD established the kingdom in his hand. And all Judah brought tribute to Jehoshaphat, and he had great riches and honor. 6 His heart was courageous in the ways of the LORD. And furthermore, he took the high places and the Asherim out of Judah.

- But, Jehoshaphat couldn't stay on course. Over time he made an alliance with King Asa of Israel who was not so godly. Asa was killed and Jehoshaphat barely escaped disaster in battle.

- Soon, Jehoshaphat's faith in God to deliver them would be tested.
- An alliance of nations decided to come after Jehoshaphat and Judah.
- Look at 2 Chronicles 20:1-5; 12-13; 15; 17.
- Here's the connection to Psalm 136: Psalm 136 was written several hundred years before King Jehoshaphat reigned. Now, I can't prove he ever sang it in worship. But look at verse 21 of 2 Chronicles.

2 Chronicles 20:21 (ESV)

²¹ And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the Lord and praise him in holy attire, as they went before the army, and say,

"Give thanks to the Lord,

for his steadfast love endures forever."

- Verse 22 says when the worship team from Judah started singing this chorus, the Lord "set an ambush" for the enemy armies and they started killing each other instead of killing the army of Judah!
- How does this story end?

2 Chronicles 20:24 (ESV)

²⁴ When Judah came to the watchtower of the wilderness, they looked toward the horde, and behold, there were dead bodies lying on the ground; none had escaped.

- Once again, Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah were spared because they obeyed God's plan. They had faith in the words they sang: "*Give thanks to the Lord, for his steadfast love endures forever.*"
- Ever had your own story of deliverance like that?
- Do you periodically and regularly bring it up in your mind and say to yourself, "*I need to give thanks to the Lord because what He did for me PROVES His steadfast love and mercy endures forever!*"
- As I studied Psalm 136 this week, I decided to give it a "nickname."

- I call it the “Fill in the THANKS” Psalm. Let’s do a little exercise in class.
- Take an index card small enough to keep in your Bible, and write at the top: *“Give thanks to the Lord, for his steadfast love endures forever.”* Then write, *“because He...”*
- Now, jot down a handful of personal examples of how God has shown you His love and mercy. Not only the things we could all say; also some real, personal examples in your own life.
- After each example write: *“His love endures forever!”*
- Now, take a few minutes right now and make your own list.
- Now, doesn’t it feel good to get “historical” about God’s love and faithfulness? Isn’t it good to “repeat yourself” when we’re talking about how He loves and cares for us?

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- This morning we’ve seen that bringing up the past and repeating yourself isn’t a bad thing when it comes to remembering how our Heavenly Father loves and cares for us.
- As we read in verses 23-26 of Psalm 136:
²³ It is he who remembered us in our low estate,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
²⁴ and rescued us from our foes,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
²⁵ he who gives food to all flesh,
for his steadfast love endures forever.
²⁶ Give thanks to the God of heaven,
for his steadfast love endures forever.
- God’s love and mercy are unchanging and our thankfulness should be UNCEASING. When it comes to remembering God’s love, it’s okay to bring up the past and repeat yourself. In fact, it’s essential!
- To prove our point we’ve written our own version of this “Fill In The THANKS” Psalm. It’s YOURS and you can keep it in

your Bible and pull it out from time to time to have your own personal worship service remembering all the reasons in YOUR life to “*Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever.*”

- At the very top of the list of every follower of Christ, we should list our own version of the Passover story. Thanks to the blood of Jesus shed on the cross, and the power of His resurrection.
- We can claim the words of verse 23: He remembered us in our low estate. He saved us from sin. Why? Because His steadfast love and mercy endures FOREVER. Let’s remember that this week!

¹ Custis, M. (2012, 2016). Chesed. In *Faithlife Study Bible*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.