

MERCY

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Psalms 136:1-3 O give thanks unto the **LORD; for *he is good***: for his mercy *endureth* forever.
O give thanks unto the **God of gods**: for his mercy *endureth* forever.
O give thanks to the **Lord of lords**: for his mercy *endureth* forever.

This chapter of holy scripture focuses the reader on the everlasting endurance of God's mercy. It is a favorite theme of David's. He was well acquainted with the wonderful mercies of God, but the singular attribute that seemed to have captured him the most was the enduring nature of that great mercy. As we read the Psalms as well as the life of David, we know that his experiences made him well qualified to say this thing about the Lord..."for His mercy endureth forever." In all the experiences he went through he was able to testify that God was always there with plentiful mercy, always just in time, and always just in the right measure.

God's people can reflect on their own lives and if they have an understanding about how God's mercy reveals itself, they too will really agree with David that His mercy endureth forever. Around 3,000 years ago David was telling about it. Now, today, we ourselves are able to tell about it.

In our text, the song is organized into a long line of verses which reiterate again and again the things about God's mercy, and associate them through a repetitive process with the fact that His mercy endures forever. We want to go with David through this Psalm, and also look at scripture elsewhere and examine the wonderful facts about God's mercy. We hope that when we are through this morning, all of us will want to say again and again, as the song does, "...His mercy endureth forever."

I. Many Acts of God Are a Display of His Mercy

V.4 - "...alone....doeth great wonders...."

- ❖ There are a number of the wonders of God, if we could look at them all in the proper light, would reflect His mercy.
- ❖ How is it that you see things with the eye?
 - Sometimes people have half their brain damaged beyond repair by some accident; but many times the other half of their brain picks up the slack and they function pretty normally after recovery. What is that?
 - Back in January of this year (2012) there was a story about a 100 year old lady who had given her daughter up for adoption 77 years ago. Through a number of events this lady was found by her daughter and they were reunited. What is that?

A. V.5 - the creation of the heavens is an act of mercy

- ❖ **Job 9:8-10** Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south.
Which **doeth great things** past finding out; yea, and **wonders without number**.
 - (first heaven) Mercy is manifested in the arrangement of gases in the envelope of air

around our earth

- (second heaven) The layout of the universe exhibits the divine character called mercy (the stars are just enough distance from us and each other; the celestial bodies have just enough influence on each other to maintain a universal equilibrium; the light from stars in heaven soothe and fill us with awe and appreciation about our universe;
- (third heaven) The creation of an eternal place where there is no sin, no sorrow, no death, and completeness in relationship to the Lord

B. V.6 - Making the earth as He did is a show of mercy

- ❖ Dictating the arrangement of water and land (picture having to live without land; picture having to live with a chaotic water cycle where there was no order to how the rain fell, how the streams ran, how the ocean was contained, how the water vapor in the air was controlled, how the land was stable. Picture living on a globe that had unpredictable and uncontrolled volcanic activity, weather events that were not predictable, and earthquakes that had no rhyme or reason.
 - See **Job 38:4-16** where God discusses with Job His ordering and stabilizing of earth and sea and nature.

C. V.7 - 9 - His ordering of the arrangement and function of the sun and moon are evidences of His mercy.

- ❖ **Psalms 104:19** He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.
 - In **Deuteronomy 33:13-14** Moses speaks of Jacob when he was blessing his offspring just before his death he mentioned the benefits of the sun and moon: “And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the LORD *be* his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, And for the **precious fruits** *brought forth* by the sun, and for the **precious things** put forth by the moon.”
 - How would the earth replenish itself without the solar cycle?
 - How would food grow for the nourishment of creatures?
 - What thick darkness without the sun!
 - The hydrologic cycle would not work!
 - Oceans stirred and replenished in part by the rise and fall of tides from moon (phytoplankton provides up to 50% of earth’s oxygen)

D. V.10 - The extricating of His people from bondage is a show of mercy.

(See also VV. 23-24)

- ❖ God not obligated to save us from the slavery to sin
- ❖ We had no leverage to compel Him to do it
- ❖ We had no argument which could persuade Him to do it
- ❖ Pure mercy brought us out of our spiritual Egypt

E. VV. 11-12 - His separating His people from the rest of the world is a mercy.

- ❖ We are not taken out of the world, but in mercy He separates us from the world by grace and does not count us with the world (in God’s eyes we are different than the rest of the world)
- ❖ Part of that separating us from the world has to do with weaning us away from worldly behavior. Knowing this, we have to say then, that when the Lord afflicts us, it is a mercy. Notice this testimony of David:
 - In **Psalms 119: 75**, he writes, “I know, O LORD, that thy judgments *are* right, and *that*

thou **in faithfulness hast afflicted me.**”

- Then notice earlier in v.v. 67 and 71 he writes, (67) “Before I was afflicted I went astray: but **now have I kept thy word.** (71) It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might **learn thy statutes.**”

F. V.13 - His timely rescue of us from calamity and violence testifies of His eternal mercy

- ❖ We may often, in our lives, be backed up against the Red Sea with violence closing quickly on us
- ❖ God always comes to our rescue and prevents us from suffering irreparable harm.

G. VV. 14-15 - Mercy upon God’s people becomes destruction to their enemies.

- ❖ It is a mercy of God that foils the best laid plots of those who would do damage to the people of God
- ❖ It is God’s mercy that withholds damage to us from our enemies

H. V. 16 - God’s careful choice of our path through this wilderness of a world is proof of His enduring mercy.

- ❖ **Psalms 37:23** “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord...”
- ❖ **Psalms 40:2** He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, *and* established my goings.
- ❖ **Psalms 94:18** When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O LORD, held me up.
- ❖ **Job 23:10** But he knoweth the way that I take: *when* he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

I. V. 17-20. We are protected by the mercy of God which keeps principalities and powers under subjection

- ❖ Many kings great and famous ruled our lives, but in mercy God overthrows them all

J. V.25 - common kindness to the creatures of earth is a testimony of His unending mercy.

K. A final note and admonition to all people about God granting mercy: found in these two verses:

- ❖ **Psalms 86:5** For thou, Lord, *art* good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy **unto all them that call upon thee.**
 - If you never call upon God, then common mercies are all you will ever get. They are wonderful, and they are what allow men to live in a measure of comfort and peace on this earth. But, the readiness of God to forgive is not extended as a mercy until a person calls on Him as the publican did in **Luke 18:13.**
- ❖ **Psalms 103:11** For as the heaven is high above the earth, *so* great is his **mercy toward** them that **fear him.**
 - The great mercies of God...those which guard, protect, assure eternal escape from the judgment to come are given only to those that fear him.

Additional Verses

Psalms 103:17 But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting **upon them that fear him**, and his righteousness unto children's children;

Psalms 51:1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Have mercy upon me, O God, **according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies** blot out my transgressions.

Psalms 106:1 Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good: for his mercy *endureth* forever.

Psalms 119:64 The **earth**, O LORD, is **full of thy mercy**: teach me thy statutes. The mercy of God inspires believers to want to see deeper into the things of God...his statutes, or laws

Proverbs 16:6 By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD *men* depart from evil.