

## 5-God's Steadfast Love

*Attributes of God*

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**Bible Text:** Psalm 103:17-18  
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We turn now to Psalm 103. This morning we want to look at this Psalm in the context of God's love. We have been considering the attributes of God and last time we looked at 1 John 4, God is love, we looked at how God is love within himself, and today I want to look at with you how God manifests that love to his people in particular and we'll do that through Psalm 103. Let's hear the word of God.

1 Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: 3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; 4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; 5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. 6 The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. 7 He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. 8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. 9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. 10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. 11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. 12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. 13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. 14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. 15 As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. 16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. 17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; 18 To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them. 19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. 20 Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. 21 Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. 22 Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.

May God bless the reading of his sacred word to all of us.

Psalm 103 is a very very special Psalm. I'm sure there are people sitting here this morning that if you said, "What is your favorite Psalm?" Some of you would say Psalm 103. Spurgeon compared it to the Alps and said this Psalm is like the highest mountain among the Alps, and then he said it's also the apple tree among the trees of the wood, and the golden fruit of a beautiful flower. It is man's reply to the goodness of his God. It is the song on the mount in the Old Testament answering to the Redeemer's Sermon on the Mount in the New.

Now no one knows exactly what circumstances David was in when he wrote this Psalm. Some people have said he was in danger of sickness, others have said it's just a grateful meditation upon a long series of mercies, others have argued he was just overwhelmed with the assurance of forgiveness. But we don't need to know the circumstances, all we need to know is that this Psalm meets believers where they're at under every condition and in every age.

Now there are a lot of ways to preach this Psalm. Preachers have done it from the perspective of redemption, what God has done for his people in Christ, it's running all throughout this Psalm. They've also done it under the theme of compassion. Again and again we read of the Lord's compassion in this Psalm, the pity he has for his people. Some have done it under the theme of providence, how God provides for his people. Others have done it in terms of covenant, a faithfulness of God towards his people in covenant relationship with him. And some have done it in terms of praise, one particular sermon I saw had 17 reasons for praising God drawn from this Psalm. But I want to do it with you this morning in our series on the attributes of God in terms of the love of God. We saw the love of God a few weeks ago internally within God, who he is, God is love, but now we want to see that love poured out among his people and that is done in Psalm 103 in just such a beautiful way.

So five thoughts this morning. God's eternal love, his righteous love, his persevering love, his expansive love and his glorious love under the simple title "God's Steadfast Love," and I'll read again right now just verses 17 and 18 which is in some ways the climax of this Psalm.

17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; 18 To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.

Well, this whole Psalm deals with a relationship between God and his people and it's summarized very well in verses 17 and 18. The key word in this Psalm is the word that we've talked about a few times over the years with you, a very special Hebrew word called chesed. It's pronounced like a ch, a hard chesed. It's an amazing word that you can't translate into one or even two English words. Many times various Bible translations have

tried different things to capture it but it's like certain words of Dutch in our background, we say you just can't get it all in one or two words. So Dutch people talk about ?? Fellowships of God's people, but it's more than that. So you use certain words in certain languages because nothing in another language captures it. That's like the word chesed, you can't capture it completely in English. Steadfast love, loyal love, perhaps are some of the best efforts.

The King James version uses the word "mercy" 149 times for chesed, "showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me," for example, we read in the law this morning. That's the word chesed, showing loyal steadfast love and mercy. 38 times our translators used the word "kindness"; 30 times, "lovingkindness"; 12 times, "goodness." You see, they don't know where to fall with his word into what category, what word can grasp it so they stumble along using different words but none of these words comprehend the breadth and the depth and height of chesed. It is simply God's amazing, steadfast, loyal, cognitive, unchangeable faithfulness. It is the expression of the God who says, "I am love." The expression of the God who is love particularly to his people whom he loves with an unspeakable of.

So this is not merely about God's feelings toward his people or about his good intentions toward his people. It goes deeper than all of that. It's about his loyal love that he proves day by day and week after week and year after year. Not just as we heard this morning in sparing four young men in a wonderful way. Those are outstanding moments for the dear parents among us of manifestations of his chesed, but daily God shows us his chesed whether we see it or not. Daily we are protected, daily we are shielded, daily we experience his loyal love. You know, one of my brothers had his seventieth birthday yesterday and we were sharing with each other how good God is to us, and actually we were both crying. He was weeping on one end of the phone, I was weeping on the other and we were saying we just can't understand the goodness of God to us. We're so unworthy and he is so overwhelmingly good. He's such a chesed God. All the goodness of God is wrapped up in this wonderful word, this amazing word. This is who God is. He pours out his love upon the unlovable. He takes the best he could find, his own Son, and he gives him away for the worst he could find, poor sinners like us.

So what this Psalm does is unpacks this love step-by-step, verse by verse. Verses 1 and 2 already, "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." And those benefits and this amazing chesed love, those benefits run from eternity past to eternity future, verse 17 says it's from everlasting to everlasting. You know, in our experiences of love here in this life, there's a beginning point, there's an ending point. In a relationship even between a loving husband and a loving wife, you ask each other or you talk about it to each other, "When exactly did it begin?" And you know that it will one day end, at least in this life. Love here must always be bereaved but that's not true for God. His love is from everlasting past to everlasting future and, you see, that gives us a dramatic insight into the astonishing uniqueness of the chesed, the love of God. He pours out who he is in essential love upon his people so that his love has its roots way back in eternity past.

So when you are overwhelmed with the goodness of God and you just have to cry out, "Bless the LORD, O my soul," and you look back at how God has always been good to you and never made any mistakes in your life, you have to say, "Bless the LORD, O my soul." This love is from eternity past, this love was determined by a God of love and why? Because he is love. And why is he love to me? Because he is love. There's nothing, there's no fountainhead beyond his sovereign glorious love, free, one-sided love that conquers our hearts and makes it a two-sided love so that we respond to his love with love and we cry out we love him because he first loved us. "Bless the LORD, O my soul." Before the world was made, before a single atom came into being, God's love was there. God's love is at work. "He has chosen him," Paul says, "chosen us in him before the foundation of the world," Ephesians 1, "that we should be holy and without blame for him in love having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will." That is chesed par excellence.

So to understand the way we experience God's love in the present, we first go back to the past. You see, today God is good to you but how do you appreciate that? By thinking about the past and then by thinking that he's never not loved me as a believer even when I was a child of wrath as others, unsaved, unconcerned about my ever dying soul. His love was still decreed upon me and that love of the past which manifests itself in the present will abide forever in the future, and that too is hard to understand, isn't it? This is an infinite chesed, an infinite steadfast love that will never die, that will never be bereaved, that we will rejoice in forever and forever. It is an infinite love that has no ending.

You know, boys and girls, I still remember when I was in the third grade and we were starting I think fractions in that grade, and I learned that the fraction one third is .3333333 infinitely and it never goes to an end, and I tried to wrap my mind around that. Why can't it come to an end? I couldn't figure it out and maybe you too, boys and girls, have struggled with how can you think about a God who never was not from eternity past, but a God who is ever living to eternally future and who is infinite, and you can't come to the end of anything about God? Everything about God is infinite. You can never fully grasp anything of God. That's why Luther called him the comprehensible incomprehensible. What we grasp is enough for our salvation but it's just the beginning of what we'll grasp in eternity, and even what we grasp in eternity will not exhaust the infinite God. The finite can never exhaust the infinite and so it is of this love, all we can cry out is, just stammer a little bit, "Bless the LORD, O my soul." You see, that's how the Psalm begins and that's how the Psalm ends, "Bless the LORD, O my soul." We are taking to eternity past, we're brought into eternity future, and one day we shall be like him, pure and holy, enjoying his love with overwhelming enjoyment and still we will never understand the completeness or the perfection or the dimensions of the love of God.

This love is so great, the psalmist says in verses 3 and 4 that he forgives all our iniquities, he heals all our diseases, he crowns us with lovingkindness, chesed, and tender mercies and redeems our life from destruction. What a love this is. He heals all thy diseases. Now David doesn't have in mind here just physical diseases because if he did, it wouldn't be true in a way, would it, because we all die from one disease or another, but he has in mind the deeper sense of the word, our spiritual diseases, the fact that we're just dead

bones by nature that need the breath of the Spirit to become an army standing with flesh and serving God and loving God, and being prepared to meet God. You see, God heals our diseases. He forgives our sins. He removes our guilt. He deals with the effects of our sin in the way it damages our spiritual life and he delivers us ultimately from all the consequences of sin and gathers us to himself to be with him forever where he is as perfect, as holy as Jesus is only. "Bless the LORD, O my soul for the chesed, the forgiving chesed of my God."

Then there's verses 4 and 5, "who crowns thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies, who satisfies thy mouth with good things so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." Isn't that what God does when he crowns us with a foretaste of his perfect eternal chesed, his lovingkindness to come? The whole idea in preaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, of God's kingdom having come and coming now and yet to come, all speaks of tiny foretastes of what will be ours in complete measure in the glorious age to come.

So what does God do in this life? He crowns us. He crowns us with lovingkindness. He satisfies our mouth with good things, foretastes of heaven. Maybe boys and girls, maybe you've been with your mom in a shopping mall or in a store and they gave out free samples of food and you could have one little bite, right, and you get a free bite but the goal, of course, you know the goal is that you like what you taste, then your mom will buy something of it and, well, the whole family can taste it and enjoy it and the store can make some money. But you see, what God does, he gives out little samplings every day of his goodness and he says, "My child, take a taste. It's free." And one day you will feast with him at his right hand where there are pleasures forevermore and it never cost you a penny because Jesus has paid the whole price with his blood.

So the point of giving out samples is that you may be taken up with the sample and you can't wait until you get the whole thing, and that's what the psalmist says here. This is what God does with us when he crowns us with lovingkindness, when he grants us tender mercies, when he satisfies our mouth with good things, he renews our youth like an eagle. He gives us Gospel foretastes so that we soar up into heavenly places and commune with God, and become stronger in our spiritual life, and anticipate being with him in his royal eternal love as the God of love forever in glory, to enjoy him forever.

Well, here below we never quite experience the completeness of this love. We never quite grasp the dramatic fullness of everything God is and everything he's capable of comes to us out of pure love, but we do grasp this, his love is from eternity to eternity and we do at many times and we have to say with the psalmist, "Bless the LORD, O my soul for this eternal love." But second, this love is also righteous love. Righteous love. Look at verses 6 and 7, "The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel." You see, we live in an age where we think we can show love to a child by spoiling or indulging a child. We joke about being grandparents who can just spoil and indulge our grandchildren, nearly always letting the child decide what he or she wants. But that is not true love whether it comes from a parent or a grandparent. That's not real grandparenting either, by the way. If we truly love our children and our grandchildren, there will be times

we have to discipline them, times we have to say no to them. They may not appreciate it at the time, but when our children grow up there comes a time, haven't you experienced that those of you who have married children, that they pulled you aside at some point and said, "Thank you. Thank you, mom. Thank you, dad, for disciplining me, for not giving me my way all the time." And you see, the Lord does the same thing. He's a Father who chastens us, who disciplines us to mature us, and so his love is righteous love. He wants to promote us to a lifestyle of righteousness.

So we are prone to think when we're small immature children when the Lord first begins to work in us, well, now God will give us in Christ whatever we want. Christ is so rich and so we are prone to go to God in prayer with a great shopping list, "Give me this. Give me that." And we lose sight of the fact that God has a backbone in the love that he gives to us, and he wants to put a backbone in us, he wants to make us strong through afflictions, through disciplines, through chastening, through trials, to make us live out of his love, to make us live out of his righteousness.

So in God, there is a way in which God wants to bring love and righteousness to live together and to work in perfect harmony, and to be fully integrated in our lives, and that's what verse 6 and 7 are all about, the Lord executes righteousness and judgment for the oppressed. He makes known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. No, this is not about mere social justice or social action. God is making a statement about something that took place in the history of Israel. The second statement, verse 7, explains the first statement, verse 6, he's saying the Hebrew people as slaves in Egypt oppressed by the Egyptians, "I trained them, I molded them through those years. I delivered them. They are my people. I discipline them. I do not forget my righteous promises to them even as I exercise righteous judgments upon them. I have set them free and I declared that freedom for every generation to come. They are my people. I called the whole book the book of Exodus. I delivered them out, that's a symbol, out of this world to prepare them for the world to come, through a way of misery, deliverance and gratitude," as our catechism puts it. In fact, Dr. Barrett used his sabbatical last semester to write a book on the theology of Exodus in the framework of misery, deliverance and gratitude. This is what God does with us. He shows us our misery by showing us his righteousness, by showing us how far short we come of what we ought to be, and by driving us to the Lord Jesus Christ so that we need the bloody doorpost, we need to be sheltered behind the bloody Christ not only a redemption that Christ procures by his death, but also that he proclaims through his servants now, that it's available for the greatest of sinners.

So Jesus is the answer for the righteousness of God. He's the one whom God makes known his ways unto his people, unto Moses, unto the children of Israel, to his people today, this righteous love, this just love through Jesus, this love of atonement, this love of satisfaction in the person of Jesus. Jesus is the Evangel. Jesus is the Gospel. He's the evangelist who proclaims his own Gospel of what he has merited through satisfying the righteousness of God, and so he can exercise a strong love, a costly love to be sure, a love that cost his own life, but ultimately a secure love.

God's love is always righteous. Have you experienced that? Has God brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the Egypt of this world? Has he stripped you of all your righteousness? Has he led you to hunger and thirst after the righteousness of Christ? And have you seen that the righteousness you need is executed in and through Jesus Christ, that his righteousness and his judgment is the salvation that you need for your oppressed soul? Has he made known his ways of Gospel deliverance to you in Christ so that you could flee this worldly land of Egypt and walk by faith and be on your way to the land of Canaan and embrace his righteous love as your salvation so glad that his love is righteous, saving, everlasting, and you would have it no other way otherwise you'd be a spoiled child if he just always gave you what you wanted? You need the righteous chastening loving hand of the Father to mature you through the meritorious work of the Son by the applicatory work of the Spirit. This is righteous love coming from the heart of love from the Father of love.

And then 8 through 14 is persevering love, persevering love. Look how God perseveres with his people in these verses. These verses bring us into the realm of God's courtship with his people. It's a lovely image. God is treating his people here with uniqueness, with individuality, and we read in verse 8, "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy." Plenteous in chesed is the original word here. He's not a God who is volatile, unpredictable, but a God who consistently shows himself to be patient, to be understanding, to be approachable. How impatient we can be with each other. How angry people can get toward each other, but the Bible says here the Lord is slow to anger. God has the right to step on us like ants going by his feet and just crush us. He can be easily angry with us all the time. We sin every day. But he's slow to anger. He's full of patience.

Versus 9 and 10, "He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger forever. He has not dealt with us after our sins to me: nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." In the worst moments of your life, God is treating you better than you deserve and better than you treat him in the best moments, the most holy moments of your life which are still mixed with sin. God's patience in his love is absolutely amazing.

You know there was an incident in the life of Napoleon when he ordered a young deserter who was brought before him to be shot, and the young man's mother came forward and fell before Napoleon and begged for her son's life, but Napoleon just unfeelingly responded, "Your son doesn't deserve any mercy." Well, the woman replied, "Sir, if he deserved mercy, it would not be mercy." You see, if you deserve chesed, if you deserve God's love, it would not be God's love, it would not be chesed. Chesed is mercy for the undeserving. This is the beauty of God, he perseveres in his love, he trains us, he molds us, he guides us.

Verses 11 and 12, his mercy is so great, David says, "as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his chesed toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knows our frame, he remembers that we are dust." Could there be any words more beautiful than that? David says, "I look in this

direction, I can't see the end of his forgiveness. I can't see where my sins have departed from because as far as the east and the west," and then he turns around and he looks in the other direction and forgiveness goes beyond his sight. All he can see in his purview is his unfaithfulness, his sins, but they are all wiped away by God as far as he can see. You see, no matter what direction he looks, in Jesus Christ all his sins are forgiven because of chesed, because of this loyal steadfast love. As far as the east is from the west, so far as he removed all our transgressions from us.

And because of that chesed, that eternal love that never changes, he has pity, he has compassion upon us like the father of the prodigal. You think that dad would be so angry with that son he would disown him forever, but he sees him a long way off and Jesus says the father is like my Father. He sees him with eyes of mercy and he runs with legs of mercy and he embraces him with arms of mercy. He kisses him with lips of mercy. It's chesed, chesed, chesed, chesed. This is the love of God and when the son tries to say, "I don't deserve to be your son," the father says, he cuts him off, he says, "Bring forth the fatted calf. Bring forth the ring which is a symbol of sonship and the shoes which are a sign of sonship and put them on for this, my son, was dead but is alive, was lost but is found. Let us rejoice and be merry." Oh, the persevering love of God is possible, is sure because Jesus having loved his own loved them to the end; because he endured to the end, his perseverance is the ground of God's perseverance, the Father's perseverance in his love to us. "Bless the LORD, O my soul."

Now in verses 15 through 17, David speaks about the expansive love of God. He does it by contrasting the permanence of God's love with the transience, the temporariness of human life. Look how he does it. It's beautiful. "As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the," chesed, the chesed, the loyal love, "the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children." To one generation after the next, God's love abides. God's love is expansive contrasted to our life. This love is everything. This love gives you a reason to live, reason to go forward. If you don't know this love, your life is really empty. But when you know this love, all is well now and forever because this love is permanent and because his love is covenantal. That's the beauty of God's expansive love.

You know, it's permanent. Once he loves you, well, he's loved you forever, but once you taste that love, you are spoiled for life and that love will conquer you, that love will subdue you, that love will outlive you because you will die but you will be raised against, and that love will just continue and then it will continue perfectly. Amazing, permanent love. Relationships in this life don't last. Boys and girls, maybe you go to school with your friends now but a few years from now when you're in college, maybe you're out in the world with a job and maybe you don't even see the friends you now have, the friendship didn't last. Friendships are temporary. Relationships are temporary. But this love is from everlasting to everlasting. It's permanent. It's permanent.



That's the kind of love we need. Everything in this life is so short, isn't it? You know, you do the math, I do the math in my life and say, "Well, I'm seven years older than my wife." The average woman outlives the average man. I'm a numbers guy so I think in terms of numbers, six years. That means humanly speaking if all my family lives to be, if, that's a big if, lives to be the age of the strong, 70 or even 80, I will go first and that would mean an average law of statistics, my wife would be a widow for 13 years and my children will follow one generation later. Will I see any great-grandchildren? I don't know. I'd have to be very old. Life flies by quickly. It's all so temporary but, you see, God's love is permanent.

So you can rest in that can't you, that no matter what happens to me, this permanent love of God will keep on going by the grace of God in my children and in my grandchildren, from generation to generation. So it's not only permanent love, David says it's a covenantal love. Look at it, "But the mercy," the chesed, "of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant, to those that remember his commandments to do them." Ah, now I know completely how to live, I just need to be filled with a childlike fear of God and pray that God would bless my life such that my children will follow that, and the grandchildren, and the great-grandchildren, and that he will keep his covenant and convey his righteousness, his love, his chesed from generation to generation, and that I might meet great great great grandchildren I will definitely never see in this life in heaven as a fruit of this chesed love of God.

Do you see how empty this world's life is? It's so short and you just die and you go into the ground, the agnostic says, and that's the end of everything and you're just an evolutionary blob that lives for a little while and you're gone. It's such a small, restricted, cramped, temporary life. But for a Christian, you've got an eternal life. You've got a God who shows mercy, chesed, actually Exodus 20 says to a thousand generations, and that God who is so big, who is so expansive, who is so unending in his life, that God we will serve forever and ever, we will be married to him forever and ever in glory. Oh, the expansive love of God, a multitude no man can number. Imagine.

This week we were singing together in a conference with 5,000 people. That's beautiful, 5,000 people singing together the praises of God. Wonderful. That's a pinprick of what's going to happen in heaven. Millions upon millions from every nation and tribe singing the praises of God, his covenant faithfulness, glorying in his chesed love. "Oh, bless the LORD, O my soul."

And finally, "Bless the LORD, O my soul," for his glorious love. That's how the Psalm ends. It's beautiful, isn't it? "Bless the LORD. Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts. Bless the LORD, ye ministers of his. Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul." God is worthy to be blessed for everything. For everything. The Lord has prepared his throne in the heavens, his kingdom rules over all, verse 19 says. The Psalmist says God is Lord. He understands what Luther would later say, letting God be God is more than half of all true religion, bowing under his Lordship, crowning him Lord of all, letting his will be done, letting his will be the desire of your

will and then rejoicing in that will and saying amen to it with all your heart in speechlessness of awesome worship where you bow down both in joy and in sorrow and in holy silence surrender all to God. This is glorious love that he works in you and you want to bless him then with all your heart.

I once read of a factory worker who received an invitation to attend the golden wedding celebrations of the Queen of England and when she was asked, "How do you feel being invited by the Queen to such a prestigious banquet?" The woman was so overwhelmed by the honor that she could not speak. The thought of being in the presence of royalty left her speechless. What will it be like on the great day to come into the presence of the Supreme Royalty of heaven and earth, Jesus Christ himself, and all of heaven breaking open in blessing the chesed God? I think there will be moments like the book of Revelation says, there were moments in heaven that it is complete silence. You cannot speak because you're overflowing with the love of God. "Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul."

This is what life is all about, my soul blessing, praising my chesed God and that's what God wants from you. That's why he's made you to worship him, to bless him, to praise him. That's why you're here on earth and if you're not doing that by the grace of God, you're not truly alive. You're not truly alive. You're missing the purpose for why you're here on earth. You could accomplish all kinds of things in your life, you could be admired by many people, but if you're not praising God, your life is a miserable failure. A failure.

You see, think about it this way. Sometimes there's people and they do famous things, and certain people praise them, but they have a broken family and the children reject their dad, and the dad is hurting inside. I read of a story once, a dad said, "I don't care how many people praise me, my own children despise me. My life is empty." But you see, if on the other hand your children come to you and say, "Thank you, dad, for who you are. Thank you, mom, for all that you are, all that you mean to me and what you've done for me," that means more than anything, doesn't it? To hear from your own children's lips? But what do you think of God? Is there anything that pleases God more than to go to him as poor sinners and say, "I thank thee, heavenly Father, for all that thou hast done for me. For the afflictions as well as the joys, and above all for thy Son. I bless thee with all my soul." That pleases God and that gives joy in our heart.

Oh, to have the chesed God be our God forever and ever. Then, you see, you don't live to try to have a large bank account so your children get lots of money when you die, but then you live to leave prayers at the throne of grace for them so that that chesed love may go on from generation to generation, everlasting to everlasting. To them that fear him and keep his covenant, follow his commandments to do them, fear the Lord and love him and bless him, and you will know a joy that is unspeakable because you're returning chesed love to the chesed God who gives it to you. "Bless the LORD, O my soul." Amen.

*Gracious God, we have no words to express thy amazing love. We thank thee, we thank thee for thy eternal love, thy righteous love, thy persevering love, thy expansive love, and*

*thy glorious love, that love that shall abide forever and ever. Oh, we long for the day when we may swim in the infinity of the ocean of that love and never come to it end, but may drink it in without one sin coming in the way, without one wandering thought, without one backsliding action. Oh, the love of God that passes all understanding. Help us, help us all our life and through all eternity to cry out, "Bless the LORD, O my soul." In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*