

**Psalm 118: 1-6; “His Lovingkindness is Everlasting”, A Communion Sermon**  
**delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017,**  
**in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

We are here this afternoon to give thanks to the Lord God for giving to us the gift of His Son. We have gathered together in His name now, to remember His sufferings and death so that they might be a reminder to every believer here, that the Lord is for you in an eternal sense and therefore you should not be afraid, either of the past, or of the future. For if you are trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for your salvation, He has saved you, and He will save you, entirely and completely. For His lovingkindness is everlasting; His mercy endures forever. We want to think together of the enduring value and efficacy of Christ’s life, and His sufferings and death, on our behalf. The word efficacy means effective or effectual power. The efficacy of Christ’s life, death and resurrection is found in His Person, and in His power to save, His power to cleanse from all sin, and His power to keep us spiritually safe, all the way to heaven. 1<sup>st</sup> – There is an enduring value and efficacy in the gospel for all believers in all generations. (verses 1-4) 2<sup>nd</sup> – There is an enduring value and efficacy in Christ to deliver your life from all distress. (verse 5a) And 3<sup>rd</sup> – There is an enduring value and efficacy in Christ to strengthen your faith. May your faith be encouraged and strengthened by these truths, when we observe the Lord’s Supper in just a few minutes.

**1<sup>st</sup> – There is an enduring value and efficacy in the gospel for all believers in all generations.**

This psalm begins with an exuberant appeal, most likely written by David, that all the people in Israel would give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His lovingkindness is everlasting. The New King James translation says: Oh, give thanks to the Lord for He is good!” “For His mercy endures forever.” The reason that king David is so exuberant is because he has come to realize how good the Lord really is to all of His people; how very good He had been, especially to himself. He had not let his enemies rejoice over him. But it was not simply winning a battle over the Philistines that he was talking about. It was not simply deliverance from wicked men that he was speaking of. He was extolling the Lord’s everlasting lovingkindness. The Lord is good to all men; kind to even ungrateful and evil men, it says in Luke 6: 35, but they will perish in their sins if they do not repent. But how everlastingly faithful is our God to His own elect people. That is what David is driving at. Let me ask you, if you are a Christian who regularly gives thanks to the Lord for His saving goodness and mercy to you personally; to you in particular? You should thank Him every day that His mercy endures forever, for He will never stop showing you, or any of His dear people mercy, because He is satisfied with the work of His Son in your place; the substitutionary sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross.

David was a type of Christ, but let us focus on the particular way that He was a type. He was a type in that he was prophet and a king in Israel. He held those two offices. Our Lord Jesus Christ is not only a Prophet and a King over God’s spiritual Israel, but He is also the High-Priest of God’s people; the Church which is composed of Jews and Gentiles. David was faithful in the two offices that the Lord placed him in; He was faithful in His generation. But Christ is faithful in His 3 offices; eternally and everlastingly. A Prophet to teach us, a Priest to offer an eternally valuable sacrifice, the sacrifice of Himself on the cross for our sins, and a King to rule over us and to defend us. He has conquered all of our enemies by His suffering and dying on our behalf. And He ever lives to intercede and to apply all those benefits of our great salvation to us day by day, and whenever they are needed.

In Psalm 117, the Psalm just before this, we find these words spoken by David: “Oh praise the Lord, all you Gentiles!” “Laud Him, all you peoples!” “For His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever.” “Praise the Lord.” These words: merciful kindness and truth enduring forever, coupled with the first four verses of Psalm 118, tell us something about

God's purpose to save. They are telling us that God is so very merciful, so very kind, and so very good, when He saves His people. He is entirely and perfectly faithful to Himself, and to His own saving purposes. And He is everlastingly faithful to His people. The salvation of any person, any sinner, is based upon His eternal purpose, and His eternal faithfulness to that purpose. He does not save a sinner for a time and then let them go back to the world, back to being a sinner again. He makes them His saints. If they fail, or if they sin, He does not cast them away. No, through our Lord Jesus Christ, God overcame and will overcome, all the obstacles that are in the way of your being saved. Your salvation is not from yourself, and it does not ultimately rest with yourself. Your salvation is of the Lord. It is initiated by Him, continued by Him, and completed by Him.

We should also understand that God will continue to show all of His elect people mercy forever because He has bestowed upon them an everlasting kingdom, and all of His elect from the foundation of the world are included in it; whether it is His elect people whom He saved before the flood, or His elect Hebrew people in the Old Testament times, or whether it is the elect Gentiles whom He saves in either Old or New Testament times; God's salvation, which is based upon His merciful lovingkindness, which is shown to unworthy sinners in all generations, is something that will endure forever. "Let Israel now say, 'His mercy endures forever.'" "Let the house of Aaron now say, 'His mercy endures forever.'" "Let those who fear the Lord now say, 'His mercy endures forever.'" Those who fear the Lord are the Jews and Gentiles, all the Israel of God, whom God has begun a good work in them, and He will complete it until the Day when Christ returns. You have regard for God, and regard for His word because He has worked in your heart this good grace to desire the knowledge of His ways, and to walk in His ways.

Oh, this is something which we should give thanks for, over and over again, and not forget. When God has begun the good work, He will continue it forever. It is He who alone can give the gift of regeneration. You cannot cause yourself to be born again. It was He who raised you from your death in transgressions and sins, dear Christian. It is He who has given you life; changed your heart, and given you a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It is something that we ought to remind ourselves of, every day. Listen to Psalm 30, verses 1-5 – "I will extol You, O Lord, for You have lifted me up, and have not let my foes rejoice over me." "O Lord, my God, I cried out to You, and You have healed me." "O Lord, You have brought my soul up from the grave; You have kept me alive that I should not go down to the pit." "Sing praises to the Lord, you saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name." "For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning."

Now, certainly David rejoiced that the Lord had kept him from being killed by his enemies; either Saul or Absalom, or his enemies on the field of battle. And we ought to thank God for all the escapes from physical harm and death that we experience. But the foes that I believe that he is more particularly referring to are the world; that is, wicked men and their deceitful schemes bringing to David the temptation to live like a worldly person. And also the Devil's temptations and assaults against him at certain times in his life. These great enemies were not able to triumph over him. For David says, "You have healed me." This was not primarily a physical healing that he was speaking about. I believe that we can see from the text that it was a spiritual soul healing; the bringing of his soul up from the grave, and God's keeping him alive from going down to the pit of hell; the restoring of His soul from the guilt and consequences of sin, and the backsliding that he had fallen into, which led him to sin against the Lord in the matter of his having sinned with Bathsheba, and having put Uriah the Hittite to death. And no doubt there were other sins also. Satan getting him to number the military men in Israel. And then there were also his heart sins and his more secret sins which he asked to be kept back from in Psalm 19, verses 12 and 13.

Now you can see why David says in verse 4 of Psalm 30, "Sing praise to the Lord, you saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name." For God's anger over the sins of His saints is only for a moment, comparatively, in time. It is not forever, as it is with those who will not confess their sins; those who persevere in wickedness and who will not believe in the promises of

God. God's favor, on the other hand, is for their entire life and throughout all of eternity. As a Christian, you may weep for a night now; and you may very clearly see what you deserve as a sinner, and yet, if you will have dealings with God over your great failures to do His will, and not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, then you will, over and over again, prove His will to be good and acceptable and perfect. God will give you joy in the morning. Joy in the morning now, and joy on the Day of the resurrection from the dead. Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, for His lovingkindness is everlasting. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Will you not praise Him for His goodness to you, having granted you repentance and forgiveness from all of your sins?

**2<sup>nd</sup> – There is an enduring value and efficacy in Christ to deliver your life from all distress.** (verses 5)

Verse 5 says – “I called on the Lord in distress; the Lord answered me and set me in a broad place.” “The Lord is on my side; I will not fear.” Will you not thank the Lord for the manifold blessings of your salvation, as you come to the table in a few minutes? There is nothing so distressing as the guilt and the shame and the remembrance of how sin has dishonored God and hurt and disappointed other people. There is nothing more distressing than realizing that you cannot do anything about these thoughts and feelings, if God doesn't help you. This is something which brings pain even to the heart of the repentant Christian. But, notice what the Lord did for David, and what He will do for you as well, dear Christian. “I called on the Lord in distress; the Lord answered me and set me in a broad place.” “From my distress; I called upon the Lord”, the NAS Bible says.

The value and efficacy of Christ's work is that He, by His life and death, He purchased us, lock, stock, and barrel. He died so that our sins would be forgiven and our hearts changed. He died in order that He might bring us to God who is infinitely great; righteous and holy, and perfect in every way. Psalm 116: 1 says: “I love the Lord, because He hears my voice and my supplications.” “Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore I shall call upon Him as long as I live.” “The cords of death encompassed me and the terrors of Sheol (the pains of my dying and going to hell) came upon me; I found distress and sorrow.” “Then I called upon the name of the Lord: O Lord, I beseech You, save my life!” Gracious is the Lord and righteous; yes, our God is compassionate.” “The Lord preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me.” “Return to your rest, O my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.” “For You have rescued my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling.” “I shall walk before the Lord in the land of the living.”

It is distressing for a true Christian that they cannot keep God's commandments perfectly. Because of this, many question their salvation and some lack assurance. But you can be delivered from this distress if you will think with me of what the Lord Jesus accomplished on your behalf, by His death and resurrection. Jesus died to bring you into the broad place of the freedom to go about to keep His commandments without being condemned. You see the perfect righteousness of God's law, and sometimes you wonder how can God put up with your imperfect obedience. Many sins of omission, and some sins of commission. We know that we are commanded to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect, and to be holy, even as He is holy. In Psalm 119: 96 David says: “I have seen a limit to all perfection (that is, to my own ability to do things perfectly, in a way that would please God and merit my salvation); Your commandment is exceedingly broad.” But God the Father sent Jesus, His only-begotten Son, to live a life of perfect obedience to His holy law. Jesus died and rose again in order that He could give to you the gift of the Holy Spirit when you believe in Him.

In giving us this Comforter and Teacher, we learn that we have been brought into a New and Living way. Hebrews 10: 14 – “For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who sanctified.” “And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, ‘This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, and on their

mind I will write them,' He then says, 'And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.' "Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin." "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh., and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." The New and Living way is this; that by Christ's power, we do go about to keep all the commandments of God, but we are covered by the righteousness of Christ in regard to all of our in all of our thoughts and actions. We are covered by the blood and righteousness of Christ. And the Holy Spirit is working in our hearts to lead us and guide us into all the truth, and He is helping us on to a sincere obedience to all of God's commandments. Where we fail, we are covered. When we sin, we are cleansed as we confess and acknowledge our sins before God.

The Lord does all this for all of His saints daily. He does all this for all who make up Zion; His Church. Look at Isaiah 33: 20-24 with me. Here it says: "Look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts; your eyes will see Jerusalem, an undisturbed habitation, a tent which will not be folded; its stakes will never be pulled up, nor any of its cords be torn apart." "But there the majestic One, the Lord will be for us a place of rivers and wise canals (NKJV says – "A place of broad rivers and streams") on which no boat with oars shall go, and on which no mighty ship will pass – For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; He will save us..." This is the broad place that the Lord has brought us into; the broad rivers and wide canals of His grace. The broadness of these rivers and canals speaks to us of the fullness and freeness of His grace and the depth and wideness of the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge. No mighty war ships or boats being rowed by slaves will be allowed on it. That is, none of the enemies of the Lord will be able to travel on these rivers and canals; that is, they will not be able to benefit from Christ's grace unless they apply for it by faith. Their own rowing, their own trying to put an oar in this water, to introduce their own good works into the way of salvation will not be accepted. They will be blocked from doing this by the Lord Himself, who is our Judge, our Lawgiver, and our King. He will deliver us from all of our enemies; from false and legalistic religion, from the schemes of the Devil and his trying to deceive us, and exert authority over us. This is the Lord's lovingkindness to us. Let us come down front now, and I will give you a few more words before we partake of the Supper.

**And 3<sup>rd</sup> – There is an enduring value and efficacy in Christ to strengthen your faith.**

Verse 6 – "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear." "What can man do to me." This is a good verse to remember now, as we come to observe the Lord's Supper. The wonderful thing that I would like each of us to remember now is this. Because Christ died for you, dear believer, He is on your side. He is your ever-faithful friend and a friend who sticks closer than a brother. Faithful are the wounds of a friend. It is because He suffered the scourging, the mocking, the crown of thorns, the nails in His hands and feet, and bearing the wrath of God there on the cross, that you now fear God. You can be delivered from all distress concerning your own soul, and also what men might do to you. The Lord is on your side. And so, your determination by the grace of God, should be that you will not fear. If you fear God, you need not fear man. They can kill the body, but they cannot kill the soul. Remember, that because of Christ's righteous life, His sacrificial death, and His glorious resurrection, that His lovingkindness towards you is everlasting. You now can have fellowship with Him in thinking about these sufferings, and asking Him to work in your heart so that you will not be afraid of any person or anything, and that you will go on to do His will. Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.