

# Psalm 136 • God's love, our eternal portion

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Psalm 136. This is one of those responsive readings. I don't know how many of you were raised in a church where you did responsive readings. Usually, they're more liturgical churches. What I mean by liturgical is that they follow a liturgy that is usually lined out in the bulletin. You walk into church, and they hand you a bulletin. You open it up, and instead of announcements, it basically gives you the format of the whole service.

There are things that the minister is going to say, and then there are things that you say, during these times of responsive reading. Well, that's not necessarily a bad thing. It's done, as I said, in more liturgical churches. We don't do it by practice, but it was something that apparently Israel did from time to time because this Psalm is really centered around the idea of a responsive reading, where someone would say make a statement, and then the people who were there, listening, would respond with their statement, which would be repeated over and over.

The statement here in the ESV is, "*For his steadfast love endures forever.*" If you have the New King James, your Bible says, "*For his mercy endures forever.*" The New American Standard Bible says, "*For his loving kindness endures forever.*"

The point of it, whatever it is we're praising God for, in this case, it is, He has an enduring quality. That is repeated over and over again in this Psalm—26 times.

Why 26 times? Good grief, God, do You think we needed to hear it that often? Yes. God says, yes, I do. Actually, you guys are kind of dense, and I know that repetition makes a big difference. I learned that back when I was working in radio and broadcasting. Why do you guys play that commercial over and over again? Because the more often you hear it, the more likely you are to go and spend your money on that thing, whatever it is. Advertisers learned that a long time ago.

Have you ever seen two commercials back-to-back, the same commercial? They play a commercial, and then play it again, and everybody goes, I think they made a mistake. No, that was no mistake. They're just trying to get through your

thick brain. So here, 26 times in this Psalm, the Lord says, or would have us say, “*For his steadfast love endures forever.* Let's read through this:

*“<sup>1</sup> Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good (and it's, and there the response is), for his steadfast love endures forever.*

*<sup>2</sup> Give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love endures forever.*

*<sup>3</sup> Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever;*

*<sup>4</sup> to him who alone does great wonders, for his steadfast love endures forever;*  
(And then, we are going to focus now on God is the wise creator. Look at these verses,)

*<sup>5</sup> to him who by understanding (your bible may say, wisdom) made the heavens, for his steadfast love endures forever;*

*<sup>6</sup> to him who spread out the earth above the waters, for his steadfast love endures forever;*

*<sup>7</sup> to him who made the great lights, for his steadfast love endures forever;*

*<sup>8</sup> the sun to rule over the day, for his steadfast love endures forever;*

*<sup>9</sup> the moon and stars to rule over the night, for his steadfast love endures forever;*

*<sup>10</sup> to him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt (Now, we're going to remember again, the deliverance of Israel over the years.) for his steadfast love endures forever;*

*<sup>11</sup> and brought Israel out from among them, for his steadfast love endures forever;*

*<sup>12</sup> with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, for his steadfast love endures forever;*

*<sup>13</sup> to him who divided the Red Sea in two, for his steadfast love endures forever;*

*<sup>14</sup> and made Israel pass through the midst of it, for his steadfast love endures forever;*

*<sup>15</sup> but overthrew Pharaoh and his host (your bible may say, army) in the Red Sea, for his steadfast love endures forever;” (ESV)*

We were actually talking about some of these things in our study of Joshua that we started last Friday morning. The men are going through the same study that the women are doing on Thursday night and Friday morning, going through the book of Joshua in nine weeks. We were talking about these elements, these events in the history of Israel, and how they're a picture of our salvation.

The nation of Israel being in bondage in Egypt is a picture of our bondage before we know Christ. Egypt is always a picture of bondage. Pharaoh is a picture of Satan: Will you let my people go? No (Exodus 5:1). Moses is a picture of the one who comes to deliver, right? And of course, Jesus is our deliverer, bringing us out of bondage.

How did God bring them out of bondage from Egypt? That last plague was Passover, remember? What were the Jews doing that night of Passover? Sheltering under the blood of the lamb, a picture of why and how we get saved by literally resting under the blood of the lamb, where the destroyer can't touch us (Exodus 12:7, 13).

Then, coming out of bondage, going through the Red Sea is a picture of baptism (Exodus 14). Through the wilderness is a time of learning, growing, and understanding (Exodus 16:35). Finally, crossing the Jordan into the land of promise is walking out the promises of God (Joshua 3:14-17). It's just a picture. It's a picture of our life.

God literally depicted our Christian life—from the place of being unsaved to the place of walking out the promises of God—in the Old Testament. The Bible even tells us in Corinthians that these things were given to us as examples (1 Corinthians 10:11), right? And they're beautiful examples.

As we're reciting them here, recognizing His steadfast love endures forever, it's a powerful thing. Verse 16:

*“to him who led his people through the wilderness, for his steadfast love endures forever;*

*<sup>17</sup> to him who struck down great kings, for his steadfast love endures forever;*

*<sup>18</sup> and killed mighty kings, for his steadfast love endures forever;*

*<sup>19</sup> Sihon, king of the Amorites, for his steadfast love endures forever;*

*<sup>20</sup> and Og, king of Bashan, for his steadfast love endures forever;*

*<sup>21</sup> and gave their land as a heritage, for his steadfast love endures forever;*

*<sup>22</sup> a heritage to Israel his servant, for his steadfast love endures forever.*

*<sup>23</sup> It is he who remembered us in our low estate, for his steadfast love endures forever;*

*<sup>24</sup> and rescued us from our foes, for his steadfast love endures forever;*

*<sup>25</sup> he who gives food to all flesh, for his steadfast love endures forever.*

*<sup>26</sup> Give thanks to the God of heaven, (Why?) for his steadfast love endures forever.”*

Did we get that through our heads, maybe? Possibly? That His steadfast love endures? How long does it endure? Forever? Oh, I got that, I think, after the 26th time.

All right, wonderful.