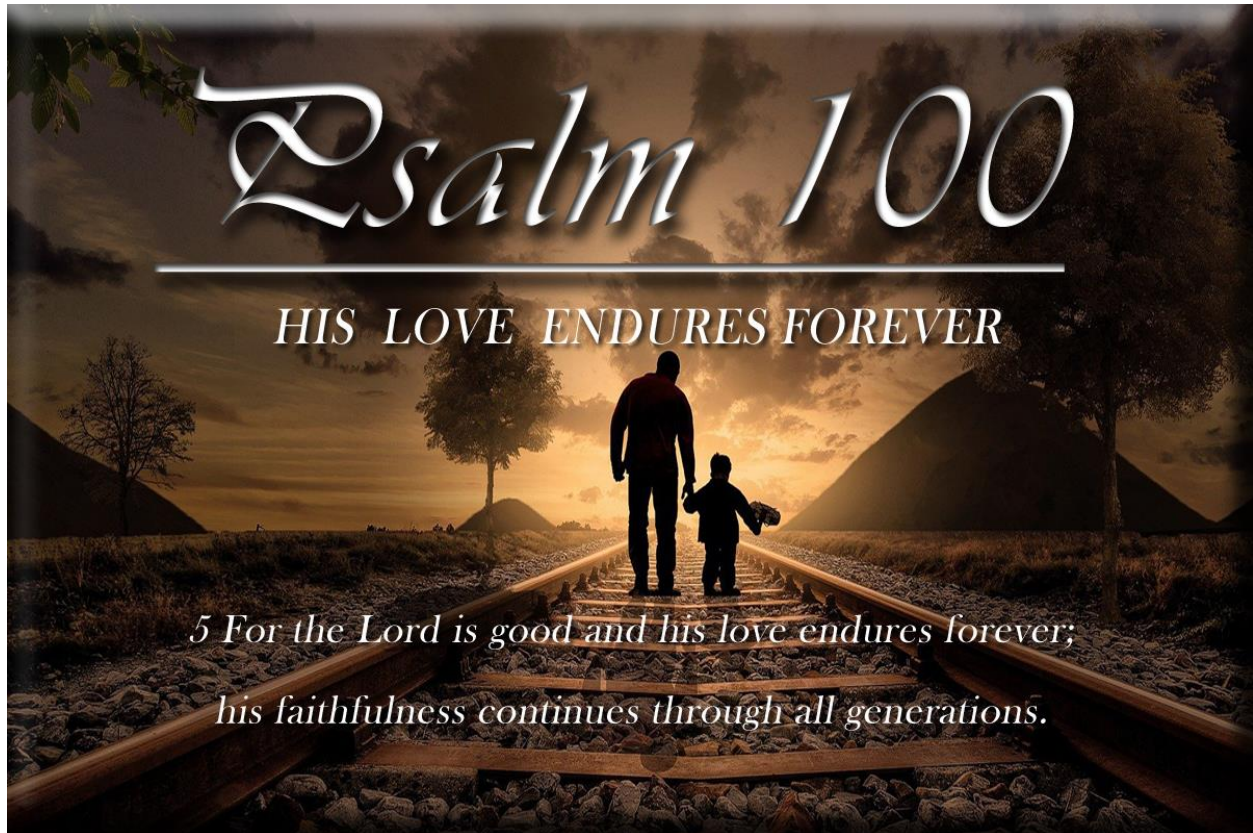


November 27, 2022

His Love Endures Forever

Psalm 100:5

**“For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;  
his faithfulness continues through all generations.**



Special Music: Psalm 100 Joshua Sherman, Charity Gayle, Steven Musso

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vwhCTtN968E>

**HE WILL NEVER EVER LET US GO**

For everything  
There's a beginning  
There is also an end.  
At least that's what I have been told.  
The sun comes up  
The sun goes down  
The Spring brings life  
The Fall plays dirges  
On winter's fife.  
Seasons come  
And seasons go.  
The rain will come  
And so will snow.  
Only to end and  
Disappear once again.

A new-born  
Enters our world  
But much to our chagrin  
In the blink of God's eye  
Is gone again.  
Life cycles,  
Generation, upon generation, upon generations  
Each of us an affirmation  
Of God's ceaseless love.  
Daughter, mother,

Dad, and brother,  
We all wait for father time  
To smother the life force  
From our bodies.  
Without a start,  
There can be no end.  
So, we dance a waltz  
And just pretend  
That death will never  
Find our souls  
And take his toll,  
But he always does.

What is there for my hands to catch,  
Something on which to grab and latch  
That will carry me through  
The great transition  
And ultimate contrition of my soul?  
What will never part my grasp  
And give me truth in solemn clasp  
Does such a thing exist  
In God's creative mist?  
Some eternal wha-cha-ma-thing  
That dances on light and gently sings  
To my soul,  
Never to fade away,  
even if I do.

**That which God proffers  
Can never fade  
Will never degrade  
Will never digress  
Into something decayed  
Or anything less  
Than God's intent.**

**The greatest of these  
Is the love of our God  
Which always abounds  
And surrounds  
The temporary nature  
And nomenclature  
Of our clay-formed  
Bodies  
And maleficent  
Minds.  
It is through our souls  
That God connects  
And interjects eternity  
Into our feeble consciousness.  
His love endures forever  
And He will never ever  
Let us go.**

**Abundant, eternal, unshakeable love. That seems to be a common theme in many of the Psalms, including this one. It is also a common theme in both the Old and New Testaments. Whether it is in words or actions, questions, teachings or parables, the everlasting, ongoing love of God for His greatest creation remains a constant. Even when humans fail Him to the point of total and complete disobedience, that point where He raises his voice and says, “You are a stiff-necked people.” That point where our stubbornness and pride stretch His patience to the limit.**

**Growing up with a younger sister always had its challenges as well as its good moments. We argued a lot. I should stress that. We argued a LOT! We drove our parents crazy with stupid arguments, intentionally irritating each other. We argued over who got to pull which side of the wishbone and then we questioned the veracity of the pull when we didn’t win. At Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter, we argued over who got to lick the bowl and who got stuck with the beaters. These days, since I live alone, I get to do both. I kind of miss having to work for it. We argued at the store. We argued in the car. Sometimes we argued just for the sake of arguing. I truly don’t know how my parents put up with it. Today, I love my sister so very much, and I have learned some things about our arguing growing up, how we often argued just to release some of the steam that built up from our home environment. Sometimes we argued just to hear our own voices and commiserate.**

**Do you ever think that God regrets giving us free will? I mean, isn’t it free will that causes all this trouble? Free will is truly a double-edged sword. God**

**gave us the privilege of believing anything we want to believe, even if it is blatantly untrue. We live in a world that constantly challenges us to be more and more like other people without ever finding ourselves. Let's face it, I'm never going to look like Brad Pitt or Sean Connery no matter what hair products I use or clothes that I wear. And whole concept of "one size fits all" works up to that point that we try it on and look in a mirror. That's when we hear that small voice of the manufacturer in our head, laughing at us and whispering, "Just kidding."**

**We know that life on this earth is finite. We know that people are born, and that people die. Yet, so many of us struggle to make as much money as we can so we can pass it along to our kids, thus giving them a good start on making more so that they can pass it along to their kids, etc., etc., etc. Like that in some way grants us a sense of perpetuity. Musicians will often write music hoping that it extends their life beyond their death. Writers are the same way. But I'm not really sure how valid that is. Although William Shakespeare is often credited with being the greatest writer that has ever lived, there seems to be a large contingent that doubts if he ever lived at all. And if he did, no one is sure how many works attributed to him, were actually written by him. Or her. There are those that believe that he might actually have been a woman. Either way, he/she is not around to enjoy the fanfare, so what difference does it make? Does it really matter?**

**We are transients in this construct, this Creation that God spoke into existence. We are just passing through. He tells us over and over again that He has a better place for us, a place with Him. We are creatures of dualistic natures.**

**We have bodies that are corporal and given to eventual loss. And we have souls that will live on through Christ Jesus. Here are just a few of the verses that talk about God's eventual plans for each of our lives:**

**My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?**

**And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.**

**John 14:2-3**

**But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,**

**who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.**

**Philippians 3:20-21**

**Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.**

**Hebrews 11:16**

**Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.**

**And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.**

**'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'**

**Revelation 21:1-4**

**No more death. No more pain. Why is this so important in context with what we are talking about? No more death. No more pain. Births and deaths are**

just polar ends of physical existence. Have you ever pondered the fact that your birth and your death were part of God's spoken Creation? Neither birth nor death existed before God spoke them into existence. While we try to understand the "Circle of Life," and give it meaning, perhaps illustrate it in a way that we can find palatable, that "Circle of Life" is not the default setting for our spirits. Until we actually understand and appreciate the concept of birth and death, we can't find peace inside or outside of God's Creation. Until we see Creation for what it is, God's Creation, a manufactured cosmos created for His children, we can't see beyond those boundaries and be able to accept that heaven, not earth, is our home, the place we are meant to be where the physical nature of a three dimensional temporary universe becomes a place of learning compassion and love for God's children, a place where we can learn to live and love in a fashion after God's own heart.

If an animal is born in a zoo and never leaves that zoo, they have no perception of what lies beyond the gates of the zoo. The zoo becomes their universe and defines their existence. Animals that have never been acclimated to other surroundings have little chance of survival in the wild. I don't want you to leave here thinking that I believe that we are animals in God's Zoo. That is not the point. Through stories and parables, Jesus tries to teach us about what heaven is like. It is nothing like the created fences and boundaries that we experience in this three-dimensional universe. There is nothing that we could experience in our corporal bodies that even touches on the wonders that await us beyond the gates of heaven.



Think about the greatest sunrise you have ever experienced. It was nothing compared to what you will experience in heaven. Think about that thunderous waterfall that you visited. As beautiful as it was, it was nothing compared to what you will experience in heaven. Think about the peace and calm of the ocean. It is nothing compared to what you will find in heaven. Think about the night sky filled with stars and a wandering moon. As glorious as it is, heaven is far more glorious. Nothing that we can experience here on earth will ever begin to match the majesty, beauty, and glory of heaven.

Where we see beginnings and endings, births and deaths, starts and finishes, heaven knows none of those things. Time has no meaning in heaven. Birth and death no longer exist. There is no start and no finish. What we experience and understand now is not what we will know to be true after we are called home.

That's not a euphemism. We treat it like it is a polite and compassionate way to say, "He died," or "She passed on." I'm not sure why we use such expressions to the point that they lose their original intent. He *HAS* gone home. She *HAS* gone home. They are in the arms of their Creator. They are where they belong. They are *HOME*. When we say, "He's gone to meet his Maker." He *HAS* gone to meet his Maker. That's not a fabrication and a help them to feel good statement. It's a truth that has lost its impact because too often it is said without meaning. What we are saying under our breath is, "I know that your husband, wife, child, sister, brother, friend has passed, but we don't want you to feel bad it. They are in a better place." Folks, they *ARE* in a better place. They *ARE* in the

arms of their Creator. They *ARE* in a place devoid of tears, pain and death. And yet we seem to say the words because we can't think of anything else to say.

When we understand death as a transition rather than a termination, we begin to glimpse the beauty of what lies ahead, what God has prepared for us. By embracing that truth of transition, we are free to look back to our parents and past generations to see that God was just as good to them as He is to us; that he will be just as good to all future generations, as He is to us. The ability to see past our own timeline in both directions shows us the consistency of God's love. We can see that God loved Moses. But we forget that He loved Pharoah as well. We can see that God loved Elijah. But He also loved Jezebel. We can see that God love the disciples, including Judas. God loves His creation whether *WE* love them or not. His love is constant, enduring, firm, unmovable, undeniable, and unfathomable. It is his own Creation, humans, that take something based in love and truth, becomes warped and twisted by questionable standards and ego driven intentions.

Who are we to question God about love? We can't begin to understand the depth of His love for us or anyone else. What fools we are to tell God who He should love and who He shouldn't. How dare we try to fit Him into a box that we have constructed pretending that it is what He has asked of us. Somehow, we find it more comfortable to believe that our lack of love and acceptance comes from God. That God is angry, hateful, and full of wrath. For what reason have we taken the role of judging people and telling them that if they do certain things, God won't love them anymore. Even when the Israelites were at their worst and

had totally abandoned God and had begun worshipping foreign idols, He still loved them.

**“For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;  
his faithfulness continues through all generations.**

God’s definition of love existed before there were any boxes, before He mouthed the words that brought the universe into existence. God has never asked us to build containers for it. God’s love existed before Creation. It was out of that love God Created us to be His children. Our spirits are born in love and that love cannot be extinguished.

This week, I want us all to think some lofty thoughts. I want us to step out of our skins and ponder the universe the way that God intended, to see it for what it is, a created space for humanity. I would then like for us to take it a step further and apply those lofty thoughts to ourselves and what we think about Creation. Can we see that the main ingredient in our creation is love? Inclusiveness, not exclusiveness? Joy, not fear? Can we picture Moses on a hillside reciting this Psalm to his Creator knowing that his words don’t do justice to the nature of God or to heaven? But something drives him to try. He cannot help but reach out to his God in thanks and wonder.

**Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.**

**Worship the Lord with gladness;**

**come before him with joyful songs.**

**Know that the Lord is God.**

**It is he who made us, and we are his;**

**we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.**

**God bless you all!**

**AMEN**

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