

LESSON 33

GOD'S STEADFAST LOVE ENDURES FOREVER

Psalm 118

¹Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever!

²Let Israel say,
“His steadfast love endures forever.”

³Let the house of Aaron say,
“His steadfast love endures forever.”

⁴Let those who fear the LORD say,
“His steadfast love endures forever.”

⁵Out of my distress I called on the LORD;
the LORD answered me and set me free.

⁶The LORD is on my side; I will not fear.
What can man do to me?

⁷The LORD is on my side as my helper;
I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.

⁸It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in man.

⁹It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in princes.

¹⁰All nations surrounded me;
in the name of the LORD I cut them off!

¹¹They surrounded me, surrounded me on every side;
in the name of the LORD I cut them off!

¹²They surrounded me like bees;
they went out like a fire among thorns;
in the name of the LORD I cut them off!

¹³I was pushed hard, so that I was falling,
but the LORD helped me.

¹⁴The LORD is my strength and my song;
he has become my salvation.

- ¹⁵Glad songs of salvation
are in the tents of the righteous:
“The right hand of the LORD does valiantly,
¹⁶ the right hand of the LORD exalts,
the right hand of the LORD does valiantly!”
- ¹⁷I shall not die, but I shall live,
and recount the deeds of the LORD.
¹⁸The LORD has disciplined me severely,
but he has not given me over to death.

WELCOME: *Fixing Our Focus*

Share with the group how you have personally experienced God’s steadfast love. After all have shared their experiences, try to see if there are any similarities, either in the situations or in the way God expressed his steadfast love.

WORSHIP: *Adoring Our God*

Suggested songs:

Forever by Chris Tomlin

In Christ Alone by Keith Getty and Stuart Townend

WORD: *Understanding the Word*

Lesson Aim: Members will look to God, no matter the circumstance, because God enables and delivers those who trust in him.

Introduction

“God is good! All the time!” We are quite familiar with this, Don Moen even has a very popular song that speaks about it. But can we truly mean every word when we are in so much distress and in the face of adversity? “How can God be good all the time if I’m having a hard life?”

Psalm 118 calls for thanksgiving as it testifies to the faithfulness of God in the life of the psalmist. It speaks of real hardship yet it is full of praises and confidence in his God – not just for his present situation but even for what is ahead of him. The psalm displays the wonderful acts of God to his people, and at the same time it reminds them to trust God alone. At the end, there is affirmation of the people’s trust and commitment to the one true God.

Leader: Lead in reading Psalm 118:1-18 aloud together. Then read the paragraph on the “Key Verse.”

Key Verse: Psalm 118 begins with “Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!” It is clear that the reason the psalmist can give thanks to God is because of his goodness and his steadfast love that endures forever. This declares that God’s goodness doesn’t change no matter what the circumstance is. He will always be good and his people will always have reason to give thanks.

Psalm 118:1-4. Theme: _____

Underline the phrase “his steadfast love endures forever” in these verses.

1. The psalmist said that God’s love is steadfast and lasts forever. Merriam-Webster defines “steadfast” as firmly fixed in place; not subject to change. What does this say about who God is?

2. Who do you think are the objects of God’s love? Is God’s love limited to just the Israelite people? Is there a way to earn this love?

In the space above, write what you think is the theme of verses 1-4.

Psalm 118:5-18. Theme: _____

Underline the phrases “the Lord is on my side,” “it is better to take refuge in the Lord,” “in the name of the Lord I cut them off,” and “the right hand of the Lord.”

3. The psalmist repeated the phrase “the Lord is on my side.” What are the implications of this? (Read Romans 8:31).

4. The psalmist also repeated the phrase “it is better to take refuge in the Lord.” What does it mean to take refuge in God?

5. In verses 10-13, the psalmist testified of a time when he experienced the Lord's deliverance. What was the situation he was in and what was the reason why he was able to overcome the situation?

6. Compare verses 14 and 16 with Exodus 15:2 and 6. The passage in Exodus is part of the song sung by Moses after God defeated the Egyptians by drowning them in the Red Sea. What does this portion of the psalm say about God?

7. Read verses 17 and 18. What does this passage say about God's discipline? How does this relate with the previous verses?

In the space above, write what you think is the theme of verses 5-18.

Psalm 118:19-24. Theme: _____

Read verses 19-24 together. Underline the word "enter" and in each instance, encircle the subject of the word.

¹⁹Open to me the gates of righteousness,
 that I may enter through them
 and give thanks to the Lord.

²⁰This is the gate of the Lord;
 the righteous shall enter through it.

²¹I thank you that you have answered me
 and have become my salvation.

²²The stone that the builders rejected
 has become the cornerstone.

²³This is the Lord's doing;
 it is marvelous in our eyes.

²⁴This is the day that the Lord has made;
 let us rejoice and be glad in it.

8. According to the psalmist, who are the ones who may enter through God's gates? How does this reconcile with Psalm 143:2?
9. The psalmist spoke of how God had exalted the "stone" which people have rejected. What do you think the psalmist meant by this?
10. How did the psalmist react to God's exaltation of the "stone"?

In the space above, write what you think is the theme of verses 19-24.

Psalm 118:25-29. Theme: _____

Read verses 25-29 together.

²⁵Save us, we pray, O Lord!

O Lord, we pray, give us success!

²⁶Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

We bless you from the house of the Lord.

²⁷The Lord is God,

and he has made his light to shine upon us.

Bind the festal sacrifice with cords,

up to the horns of the altar!

²⁸You are my God, and I will give thanks to you;

you are my God; I will extol you.

²⁹Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;

for his steadfast love endures forever!

11. In these verses, the psalmist is joined by a congregation of worshipers, as they lift their prayers, praise, and thanks to God. What can we learn here regarding worship as a community?

In the space above, write what you think is the theme of verses 25-29.

Psalm 118 in the New Testament

1. Verses 22-23 have been quoted many times in the New Testament (see Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10-11; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:7). How do the authors of these verses interpret these two verses?
2. When Jesus came into Jerusalem during the first Palm Sunday, the people quoted verses 25-26 in welcoming him (see Matthew 21:9; Mark 11:9; Luke 13:35; 19:38; John 12:13). What is the significance in their quoting of these verses?

“Save us,” when transliterated from Hebrew, becomes “hosanna.”

WALK: *Applying the Word*

Questions for Adults

1. How can we make God our one and only refuge? What is it that makes us depend on other people or things despite knowing that the Lord is on our side?
2. How is God’s grace and mercy made evident in your life? Have you gone through a season of God’s discipline? If so, share it with the group.
3. How can GCF bear witness to the Ortigas community that we are a community of believers? What can your group do to contribute to this?
4. Individually and as a group, pray back this psalm to God. You could start by saying something like:
Father, you are my strength and my song. You have become my salvation...
5. Pray for GCF (Prayer requests supplied by the Leader).

Questions for the Youth

1. Some people go to the Internet and read blogs or watch videos when they face problems in life. Where do you usually turn to when you run

into problems, such as with relationships? What about it that makes you turn to it?

2. What can you do to make God the first person you turn to when facing problems? What are some changes you need to make in the way you think or in your attitudes?
3. Share an instance when you felt you were helpless but God intervened in your situation and saved you. Spend time in prayer thanking God for his steadfast love.

Questions for Children

1. How does knowing that God's love lasts forever affect your attitude towards difficulties in life, like when people unfairly gang up against you?
2. Why is God worthy to be made our refuge during times of difficulty? How is God better than people or things?
3. Have you experienced God saving you or getting you through difficulties in life? Share this with the group and say a prayer of thanks to God.