

## God's Love In The Psalms (Go To Meeting)

Lindsay Stephens—August 4, 2023

Hello everybody, happy Sabbath to you. The Sabbath day is a great opportunity for us to get together in fellowship. It is a forerunner of a greater fellowship that we're going to have in the Kingdom of God. Isn't that something to look forward to?

We know in today's world, there's a lot of people who do not believe in God. Those who do believe in God think of that the God in the Old Testament was a harsh God who was only for the Jews, only relevant for the Jews.

A 'harsh' God laid down the Laws and if you break the Laws, then you suffer the penalty. There didn't seem to be much love in that. But what I want to do here is to present to you in the Old Testament, indeed, **that He was a God of love!**

I want to emphasize this in the Psalms today. There are a few things that I want to bring out, a couple of criteria. The first thing we want to go to is in:

John 1:1: "In *the* beginning was the Word, and the Word was with the God, and the Word was God. He was in *the* beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and not even one *thing* that was created came into being without Him" (vs 1-3). *So, Jesus Christ was there from the very beginning:*

Revelation 22:13: "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning..."

He was the God of the Old Testament. Another thing I want to bring out is in:

1-John 4:8: "...God is love."

Now, going on that basis, we can recall in:

Malachi 36: "For I *am* the LORD, I change not..."—*relating that to:*

Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

So, in other words, The Jesus Christ of the New Testament was the God of the Old Testament, ***the God of love!***

So, I just want to establish that first. What I want to bring out, is that there are some expressions of God's love that I want to bring out in this message today: ***Expressions of God's Love!*** It's almost exclusively in the Psalms, and what I want to concentrate on.

### #1—Love is Forgiveness

We know that sin entered the world in Gen. 3 and in the tree of Satan and tempted Eve, and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Unfortunately, Adam and Eve both took of the fruit, which they were not meant to do, and sin entered the world. And from that time on, there has been sin in the world. *And the result of this:*

Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." *And the result of this, the result of sin:*

Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin *is* death, **but the gift of God...**"—*a gift that can be redeemed through Jesus Christ, through His death!*

The first Psalm I want come to is Psal. 51:1, which is very familiar to us all. It's King David after the sin that he had with Bathsheba and with Uriah the Hittite.

Psalm 51:1: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin" (vs 1-2).

We think of being cleansed though by ***the washing of the water by the Word*** (Eph. 5:26)!

Verse 3: "For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me."

God does love repentance, because once we repent, then He certainly has something to work with for our growth.

Verse 4: "Against You, You only, have I sinned..."

All sin, all sin is against God, and that is the reason why Christ had to die.

"...and done evil in Your sight, that You might be justified..." (v 4).

When you speak and be in the right when you judge, be in the right with God.

Verse 6: "Behold, You desire Truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom"

The inward part, that's the extra part that's hidden from the world. The world doesn't know what's inside us, but God certainly does. He knows where we fall short.

Verse 10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

That's repentance after each mistake. We make mistakes, we sin, and we need to repent after each one!

Verse 11: "Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me."

So God will not cast a repentant person out from His presence, because he wants each one of us to make it into His Kingdom. In relation to this:

Psalms 32:1: "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

If we expose our sin, it is covered, God covers it up! But ***IF*** we cover it, ***it is exposed!*** Just think of David when he covered his sin, God exposed it, ***he was exposed!***

Verse 5: "I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, 'I will confess my transgression to the LORD,' and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah."

By recognizing our faults, we open the door to healing and restoration.

Psalms 86:5: "For You, LORD, are good and ready to forgive, and rich in mercy to all those who call upon You."

God is waiting for us to, each one of us, to repent from our sins, and is ready to forgive at any time. God has a forgiving nature! We can compare that with a parent and a child. A child often not short, and the parent is willing to forgive.

Psalms 103:1: "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; Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies" (vs 1-4).

If there is repentance, He will forgive. There is no sin that he won't forgive. We think of, just think of some of the people who committed great sins. We'll think of King Manasseh, who for 55 years was an evil ruler, but he repented! And God forgave him of all that. That's the extent of God's forgiveness.

Verse 12: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."

It's all on the condition of repentance. He will remove the sin from us. That is just one example of the extent of God's love. Human beings

are frail; there is a human frailty. There's always ***hope in seeking God's forgiveness!***

Psalms 130:1—this is a cry to help: "Out of the depths I have cried unto You, O LORD. LORD, hearken unto my voice, and let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O LORD, who shall stand?" (vs 1-3).

It points to Rom. 3:23, as I mentioned before, if it wasn't for Jesus Christ, or his death, "...who should stand?"

Incidentally, of these 150 Psalms, 73 at least were directly directed to David, who wrote these Psalms, and probably a lot more of them.

Verse 4: "But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared"—*through the sacrifice of Christ!*

Verse 8: "And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."

Redeem Israel in the second resurrection, which is physical Israel, and with us, it would be in the first resurrection.

Psalms 25:8: "Good and upright is the LORD; therefore, He will teach sinners in the way."

Jesus said, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' (John 14:6).

Verse 9: "The meek He will guide in judgment; and the meek He will teach His way. All the paths of the LORD are mercy and Truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies" (vs 9-10)—*referring to the New Covenant!*

Verse 11: "For Your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my iniquity, for it is great."

It's a need to repent every day of the sin we have within us!

Verse 12: "What man is he who fears the LORD? He shall teach him in the way that He shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease, and his seed shall inherit the earth" (vs 12-13).

That's a promise that God has given to us. We are the firstfruits, and we've been given that promise!

Verse 14: "The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant."

Show us God's Plan. God's Plan is revealed to us through the Sabbath and the Holy Days.

## #2—Love is Compassionate

God is obviously compassionate; God is full of compassion for us:

- He knows us
- He loves us,
- He created us specifically, intimately, with a purpose

He can see through the complex mind field of human emotions.

Psalm 139:1: "O LORD, You have searched me and have known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thoughts afar off... [by the spirit in man] ...You measure my going about and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways, for there is not a word on my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, You know it altogether" (vs 1-4).

Verse 14: "I will praise You, for I am awesomely and wonderfully made; Your works are marvelous and my soul knows it very well."

God is love, as I mentioned before, and He formed us with love.

Psalm 103:13: "As a father has compassion upon his children, so the LORD has compassion upon those who fear Him."

We think of little things that children worry about; that mean nothing to us. They certainly meant something to us when we were children ourselves. But we help them, we support them and we have compassion on them.

Verse 14: "For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust."

Isaiah 55:8: "For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways,' says the LORD."

So it's the same sort of comparison with us with little children, when we're training them to grow up to adulthood.

Psalm 145:8: "The LORD is gracious and full of compassion; slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love."

We think of little things that children worry about; abounding means *He has a lot on it!*

Verse 9: "The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works"

Psalm 111:3: "His work is glory and majesty, and His righteousness endures forever.... [that's a promise that we've been given] ...He has made a memorial for His wonderful works; **the LORD is gracious and full of compassion**" (vs 3-4).

We think of a memorial as the Sabbath Day, it's a memorial to God's creation, and also points to His future in the Millennium. There's something to reflect on every Sabbath!

Closely related to compassion is His tender mercy. In the longest Psalm, which is Psalm 119, a couple of verses there that mentions tender mercy, and we'll come to that.

Psalm 119:77: "Let Your tender mercies come to me so that I may live, for Your Law is my delight." *This is eternal life!*

Verse 156: "Great are Your tender mercies, O LORD; according to Your judgments give me life."

Often in the Psalms, we do see a cry for help.

Psalm 116:4: "Then I called upon the name of the LORD: 'O LORD, I beseech You, deliver my soul.' Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. The LORD preserves the simple..." (vs 4-6).

Now, we could think of the simple as being the uneducated, OR *you could also mean humble, or those willing to learn, learn God's way of life!* Think of Jesus with the attitude of little children who are willing to be taught.

"...I was brought low, and He saved me" (v 6). *It is God who saves us!*

### **#3—Love is Powerful**

We think of God as, we think of God who is reliable, solid as a rock, when everything else around us cracks and crumbles and fails.

God's love is perfect, powerful and it goes all through time. We think of from the time of creation, what God did with the children of Israel bringing them out of Egypt. *He did that through His power!*

So, the Psalm that does think in terms of God's power is:

Psalm 18:1: "I love You, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my Rock, and my Fortress, and my Deliverer; my God, my Rock in Whom I take refuge... [tie in 1-Cor. 10:4: "...That Rock was Christ."] ... He is my shield... [tie in Eph. 6:16, as part of the armor] ...and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, I will call on the LORD, Who is worthy to be praised, so shall I be saved from my enemies" (vs 1-3).

*Love does rescue us with God's power! Psa. 18 does teach us to hold onto that!*

Verse 30: "As for God, His way is perfect; the Word of the LORD is tried. He is a shield to all those who take refuge in Him.... [we think of the armor of God] ...for who is God besides the LORD? Or, who is a Rock except our God? **The God Who** girds me with strength and **makes my way perfect**" (vs 30-32).

*It is God who perfects us! We are to become perfect!*

Verse 35: "You have also given me the shield of Your salvation... [tie in Eph. 6:16] ...and Your right hand has held me up, and Your gentleness has made me great."

Psalms 27:1: "The LORD is my Light and my salvation... [Christ is the Light of the world (John 8:12)] ... whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, my enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell" (vs 1-2). *We do have many foes in this world!*

Verse 3: "Though an army should encamp against me, my heart shall not be afraid; though war should rise against me, even then I will be confident."

The shortest Psalm in the Bible is Psalm 117, but there are so many aspects of God's love in that, including God's power.

Psalms 117:1: "O praise the LORD, all you nations; praise Him, all people, for His merciful kindness is great toward us; **and the Truth of the LORD endures forever**.... [into eternity] ...Praise the LORD!" (vs 1-2).

#### #4—**God Gives Us Hope**

By definition, hope is *the optimistic expectation for a certain thing to happen!* That's our way of expressing God's promises. Part of our faith to God is that God will be true through His promises.

1-Peter 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again unto a living hope through *the* resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." *Very encouraging for us!*

Psalms 71:1: "In You, O LORD, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame. Deliver me in Your righteousness and cause me to escape; **incline Your ear unto me, and save me**" (vs 1-2).

- whatever the circumstances
- whatever the situation is

And there have been many dire circumstances in our lives, they come up unexpectedly, and that's the

time that we call out to God to save us! Incline His ear to us at the time and save us! **God will, IF we have faith in Him, He will!**

Verse 3: "Be my strong Rock of refuge... [it's been **rock** mentioned so many times in the Psalms] ...to which I may always go; You have commanded to save me; for You are my Rock and my Fortress. Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and ruthless man, for You are my hope, O Lord GOD, my trust from my youth" (vs 3-5).

Verse 14: "But I will hope without ceasing, and I will praise You more and more."

Psalms 62:5: "My soul, wait in silence for God alone; for from Him comes my hope. He only is my Rock and my salvation; He is my strong tower; I shall not be moved" (vs 5-6). *Rock is mentioned so often in the Psalms!*

Psalms 33:20: "Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and our shield."

David had hope in his Creator, even after all his trials; David had so many trials. After he had that sin with Bathsheba and Uriah the Hittite, he had no end of trials with his family for the rest of his life.

Psalms 119:49: "Remember the Word to Your servant upon which You have caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction, that Your Word has given me life" (vs 49-50).

So much comfort in that. The final verse we have regarding hope:

Psalms 130:7: "Let Israel hope in the LORD; for with the LORD there is mercy, and with Him is plentiful redemption." **Christ is our Redeemer!**

#### #5—**Love is Steadfast**

It's steadfast is being fixed in direction, firm in purpose, resolution, and attachment.

Human beings are very limited, human commitments, they are fallible, and have limitations. We think of that in terms, and compare that with God's great love for us.

Psalms 108:1: "O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and I will give praise, even with my glory." *Anything good comes from God!*

Verse 2: "Awake, harp and lyre; I will awake early.... [think of that as a type of the resurrection] ...I will praise You, O LORD, among the people; and I will sing praises to You among the nations, for Your mercy is great above the heavens; and Your Truth reaches unto the clouds" (vs 2-4).

John 17:17: *Jesus says*: "...Your Word is the Truth."

Psalm 108:5: "Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, and Your glory above all the earth."

These verses here are repeated in Psalm 57: 7-11

- Is God limited with His love?
- Is there a limitation to it?

Psalm 100: 3: "Know that the LORD, He is God. He has made us, and we are His; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise; give thanks unto Him and bless His name, for the LORD is good; His steadfast love is everlasting; and His faithfulness endures to all generations" (vs 3-5).

We think of all generations expanding into the Millennium, and beyond the Millennium into the ages of eternity; no limit to it.

Psalm 69:16—we have another aspect of it: "Answer me, O LORD, for Your steadfast love is good; turn unto me according to the multitude of Your tender mercies. And hide not Your face from Your servant, for I am in trouble... [David appeals to God when in trouble} ...answer me speedily" (vs 16-17)

*In God's time in the context of eternity!* Though with us, sometimes it may seem longer than what we would want.

Some of these Psalms may be repeated, but they still apply to the attributes that I'm bringing out here.

Psalm 86:15: "But You, O LORD, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and Truth." *God's steadfast love abounds!*

Psalm 119:76: "I beseech You, let Your steadfast love comfort me, according to Your promise to Your servant."

We need to ask this continually. Our life is limited with time in what we can do in this life. There's so much we want to do, and we can't do. We need to ask God continually to make the best use of it. The next Psalm relates to that a bit more.

Psalm 103:8: "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in mercy."

Verse 15: "As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes And that is in the prime of life."

In the prime of life, people like to think that they're pretty good. In the world, we have these celebrities, we have these sports people. Many of them like to think, 'Look at me, aren't I great?'

I remember one great boxer—Muhammad Ali, world champion—and he is. One of the statements he said was, 'I am the greatest.'

*But we come to v 16*: "For the wind passes over it, and it is gone; and its place shall know it no more."

Well, after a few years, Muhammad Ali got Parkinson's disease. But I believe that later in life he became a very humble person.

Verse 17: "But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear Him, and His righteousness is unto children's children."

The theme of Psa. 136 is steadfast love, the whole theme of it. It's actually mentioned in every verse. We'll just do the first and the last verses:

Psalm 136:1: "Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever."

Verse 26: "Oh, give thanks to the God of heaven, for His mercy endures forever."

#### #6—Love Teaches Trust

It means that however we suffer, we believe that God will use our trials for our good and for His glory. If we trust in God, it gives us peace of mind.

In trusting, we know that we can't always trust people; we certainly can't trust the world, the way the world is. *God's Word says that we need to trust Him and Him only!*

Psalm 37:1: "Do not fret yourself because of evildoers, and do not be envious against the workers of iniquity." *There's plenty of iniquity in the world today!*

Verse 2: "For they shall soon be cut down like the grass; and wither as the green herb.... [there's an end to their evil] ...Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and cherish faithfulness" (vs 2-3).

The trust is actually putting into action what we believe!

Verse 4: "Delight yourself in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart."

What is our desire? *Our eternal life in the Kingdom of God!*

Psa. 91 is another one that relates to trust in different circumstances under trials and difficulties.

Psalms 91:1: "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, **my God, in Whom I will trust**'" (vs 1-2).

This is about trusting God for protection. There's so much that we need to rely on God for protection today from the evil; it's there!

Verse 3: "Surely He will deliver you from the fowler's trap and from the destroying pestilence. He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge. His Truth shall be your shield and buckler" (vs 3-4).

*We think again of the armor of God in Eph. 6:10-18).*

Verse 14: "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore, I will deliver him; I will set him on high because he has known My name." *We're going to be set on high in the Sea of Glass!*

Psa. 62 shows the confidence and love that God has for us.

Psalms 62:1: "Only for God does my soul wait in silence; from Him comes my salvation. He only is my Rock and my salvation; He is my fortress; **I shall not be greatly moved**" (vs 1-2).

Even when sin comes along, we are never greatly moved far from God. If we repent God is never, never far from us!

Psalms 118:8: "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to trust in princes" (vs 8-9).

Look at the politicians in the world today. Do they keep their promises? How many promises don't they keep? Just think of the books that could be written on broken promises. God always keeps His promises.

## #7—**Love is Patient**

In today's fast-paced, secular, selfish society, it's hard to be patient, but it is necessary:

- to live by God's Word
- to live God's way
- to be patient

1-Corinthians 13:4—*the love chapter*: "Love is patient *and* is kind..."

Gal. 5:22 & 23 *patience* is not actually mentioned, but long-suffering and self-control is, and both those fruits require patience.

Psalms 103:8: "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in mercy."

Psa. 27 is showing that God is the Light of our path, the Light of Truth and Illumination of our salvation. And Jesus is the Light of the world (John 8:12).

Psalms 27:14: "Wait for the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall make your heart strong; yea, wait, I say, *wait* on the LORD."

There it is, we have to be patient! Why do we need to do this?

Verse 4: "One thing I have desired from the LORD, that I will seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in His Temple."

Well, that's something that's worth being patient for, something well worth waiting for! Another aspect of patience is in:

Psalms 40:1: "I waited patiently for the LORD, and He inclined unto me and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit... [think of Jeremiah; he was in a pit] ... out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a Rock... [on Jesus Christ, He's the Rock, our salvation] ... and established my steps" (vs 1-2).

So that we can think of it as bringing us out of the simple world, our sins, and by putting on Christ.

We go back to Psa. 37 because it has an element of patience.

Psalms 37:7: "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret yourself because of him who prospers in his way, because of him who carries out wicked schemes. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret yourself, it leads only to evil, for evildoers shall be cut off... [their days are ended, are going to be ended] ... **but those who wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth**" (vs 7-9).

It is but a little while, though in the context of eternity it is only a short time. And the wicked shall be no more. Now you shall diligently consider his place, and he shall be there.

Matthew 5:5: "Blessed *are* the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

They shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. And Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6).

We come to conclusion God's love in the Psalms. God's love in the Psalms is so extensive!

There's so much in the Psalms about love of God. Certainly, you know, we think of the Protestants who think that the God of the Old Testament, the harsh God.

God's love in the Psalms is so extensive! I just want to repeat the expressions of God's love that I mentioned, and there's probably far more of them.

1. love is forgiveness
2. love is compassionate
3. love is powerful
4. God gives us hope
5. love is steadfast
6. love teaches trust
7. love is patience

I do hope that you have received something out of this. It's an expression of God's love. and God's great love for us, ***which will go into the ages of eternity!***

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) John 1:1-3
- 2) Revelation 22:13
- 3) 1 John 4:8
- 4) Malachi 3:6
- 5) Hebrews 13:6
- 6) Romans 3:23
- 7) Romans 6:23
- 8) Psalm 51:3-4, 6, 10-11
- 9) Psalm 32:1, 5
- 10) Psalm 86:5
- 11) Psalm 103:1-4, 12
- 12) Psalm 130:1-4, 8
- 13) Psalm 25:8-14
- 14) Psalm 139:1-4, 14
- 15) Psalm 103:13-14
- 16) Isaiah 55:8
- 17) Psalm 145:8-9
- 18) Psalm 111:3-4
- 19) Psalm 119:77, 156
- 20) Psalm 116:4-6
- 21) Psalm 18:1-3, 30-32, 35
- 22) Psalm 27:1-3
- 23) Psalm 117:1-2
- 24) I Peter 1:3
- 25) Psalm 71:1-5, 14
- 26) Psalm 62:5-6
- 27) Psalm 33:20
- 28) Psalm 119:49-50
- 29) Psalm 130:7
- 30) Psalm 108:1-4
- 31) John 17:17
- 32) Psalm 108:5
- 33) Psalm 100:3-5
- 34) Psalm 69:16-17
- 35) Psalm 86:15

- 36) Psalm 119:76
- 37) Psalm 103:8,15-17
- 38) Psalm 136:1, 26
- 39) Psalm 37:1-4
- 40) Psalm 91:1-4, 14
- 41) Psalm 62:1-2
- 42) Psalm 118:8-9
- 43) 1 Corinthians 13:4
- 44) Psalm 103:8
- 45) Psalm 27:14, 4
- 46) Psalm 40:1-2
- 47) Psalm 37:7-9
- 48) Matthew 5:5

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Genesis 3
- Ephesians 5:26
- John 14:6
- Ephesians 6:16
- 1 Corinthians 10:4
- John 8:12
- Psalm 57:7-11
- Ephesians 6:10-18
- Galatians 5:22-23
- Isaiah 9:6

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