

For His Mercy Endureth Forever

by Jack Hyles

The sermon emphasizes the everlasting nature of God's mercy and its significance in the lives of believers.

Scripture: Psalm 23:6, Psalm 107:1, Lamentations 3:23, Ephesians 2:4

Topics: "Gods Mercy", "Divine Forgiveness"

Description

Jack Hyles preaches about the enduring mercy of God as highlighted in Psalms 136, emphasizing that His mercy goes beyond our deepest sins and loneliest hours, always conquering and enduring forever. The sermon delves into various instances in the Bible where God's mercy is evident, from the dedication of the Temple to the return of the ark of the covenant, showcasing how His mercy sustains His people through trials and victories. Hyles stresses the importance of acknowledging our need for God's mercy, whether in times of sin, sickness, heartache, or uncertainty, as His mercy is ever-present and all-encompassing.

Transcript

Twenty-six times in Psalm 136 we find these beautiful words, "For His mercy endureth forever." One of the most comprehensive statements regarding the nature of God in all the Bible--"For his mercy endureth forever"--26 times it is mentioned in the chapter.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever (Psalm 23:6)." The thought of the mercy of the Lord just overcame me this past week. The fact that the Lord's mercy endureth forever, means nothing can stop His mercy. I woke up Tuesday morning praising the Lord for His mercy. I took the concordance and began looking up the places where I could find the word mercy.

This morning, are you deep in sin? His mercy goes deeper than your sin. Are you away from God? Are you living a life that's not counting? His mercy goes beyond. No matter how deep you've fallen, His mercy is sufficient. It doesn't matter how far you've strayed; His mercy goes just a little farther.

A black man was on trial down south. He was trembling with fear. The judge said, "Now look, fella, don't be so nervous; you're gonna get justice." The prisoner said, "I don't need justice--I need mercy!" And that's what I need. And that's what you folks need. And that's what everyone needs.

In Romans we read, "Grace and peace be unto you." When a Jew met someone on the street, he'd say, "Peace" or "Shalom". They still do it in Palestine. When you meet a fellow on the street down where I

came from you said, "Hi." But in Israel they say, "Peace." Paul wrote and said, "Grace and Peace." Why? Because no one has peace until he has grace. I Corinthians starts off, "Grace and peace be unto you." So does 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and both books to the Thessalonians. When you read I Timothy, it says, "Grace, mercy and peace be unto you." I laughed and said, "Lord, I think I know why you said mercy. Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians were written to churches. But Timothy was written to a preacher, a preacher needs more mercy than anybody else in the whole world!" Read 2 Timothy, and again Paul said, "Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you." In Titus he said, "Grace, mercy and peace be unto you." When God wrote to a preacher, He thought, "A preacher had more burdens; more heartaches; than anybody else." The Lord said, "To the church at Galatia, grace and peace;" but when He got to Timothy, he said, "grace mercy and peace be unto you." When the Lord wrote the epistles to an individual, He included mercy. Why? Individuals need mercy. You need mercy this morning. There's not a one of us here that doesn't need the mercy of God. None of us deserves to go to heaven. None of us deserves the blessing of God. And so God gives us mercy.

"Thy mercies are new every morning," Lamentations 3:23. Why does the Lord say He is merciful in the morning? It looks to me as if He would have said, "Thy mercies are new every evening" --after all, during the day our meanness has been done, we need mercy after we've gotten mad, had unkind thoughts and spoken unkind words. We need mercy after we have grown impatient and lost our temper a few times. Most of us need mercy at the end of the day when it's time to go to bed and we look up to Him and say, "Lord, I didn't mean to do like I did today. I meant to do better. Lord, forgive me." He would forgive us and then we could say His mercies are new every evening. But why did God say every morning? Because we're mean while we're sleeping. I preached in Texas the other day near a church I once pastored. In that church I had what Dr. John R. Rice calls a "long-horned deacon." I drove past this church, where I had pastored. For 18 or 19 years I hadn't had one evil thought in my heart against that deacon. I drove down the streets in front of the church and went past the deacon's place and thought, "Now, that place belongs to that old long-horned deacon." I asked if he was still living--he is now in his eighties. They said, "Yes, he's still alive."

"I'm glad my heart's clean about that fellow. I don't hold any bitterness." That night I dreamed I punched him in the nose! When I woke up, I was glad I did it. Even while we're asleep, we need God's mercy. We are sinners morning and evening, therefore the Lord said, "Thy mercies are new every morning."

The psalmist said in the 19th Psalm, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults, O Lord." Secret faults--those that other people don't know about? That verse is talking about my faults I don't even know about. The psalmist said, "Lord, forgive my sins," more than that, "forgive the sins that nobody else knows about but me." And more than that, "cleanse the sin I don't even know about, those unholy motives I have, those tainted purposes, the things I shouldn't do, and the things I leave undone that I should do." That's why I think the writer of Lamentations said, "Thy mercies are new every morning. Great is thy faithfulness."

I got to thinking about the events in the Bible where "His mercy endureth forever." In 1 Chronicles 5:17, Solomon had finished building the Temple. He comes to dedicate the Temple and when the ark of the covenant is brought in, singers began to sing, instruments began to play, and the writer said, "His mercy endureth forever." The king, stood and prayed the dedicatory prayer. While we was praying, Solomon stopped and said, "His mercy endureth forever." I got to thinking about how God blessed them by giving the Shekinah glory in the holy of holies, so bright that the priest could not minister. They said, "His mercy endureth forever."

I began to recall the years here at this church, how good God has been to us. Try to think of a service here in the church when God didn't suddenly speak to someone in the choir, or someone didn't give us an extra special blessing or there wasn't some special conversion or some special blessing that God gave us. I do not know of any church in the world where God has faithfully blessed anymore than He has blessed us; Sunday after Sunday, week after week, and blessing after blessing. Every one of us ought to stand up and say;, "Blessed be God--His mercy endureth forever!"

Somebody came to our services recently saying, "When we want a blessing, we come to First Baptist Church, Hammond. We know we'll always get it." That's what I'm talking about. Praise the Lord! Hallelujah!

When the Holy of Holies in the Temple was opened and the glory of God filled the place, the people sang and said, "His mercy endureth forever." But that isn't all. In 1 Chronicles 16:41, the phrase is mentioned again. The ark of the covenant had been removed from Israel; the Philistines had taken it to Gath and Ekron and Ashdod. For years the ark of the covenant had been gone; and now the ark returns to Jerusalem. Do you remember David's happiness when the ark came back? David, King of Israel danced around the ark. When his wife, Michael looked down and saw her husband, she said, "It's a disgrace for a king to dance, making a fool of himself." It's like someone accusing you of being a Nazarene because you shout. Praise God and shout "Amen". We ought to dance around the ark of the covenant and praise the Lord. Ladies and gentlemen, kings ought to praise the Lord. Preachers...deacons...Ph.D.s...schoolteachers...doctors... lawyers... presidents...senators...congressmen...judges--all of us ought to join hands in saying, "His mercy endureth forever." And so David said again, "His mercy endureth forever."

But there's a third time. The Temple was destroyed; the Israelites were led away in captivity into Babylon. The walls had been leveled, their homes had been destroyed and the Temple had been desecrated. For 70 homesick, lonely years they lived away from their home. For 70 years they sat down and wept by the River Chebar in Babylon. They wouldn't play their harps and they wouldn't sing the psalms of joy. One day God burdened Zerubbabab to return and rebuild the Temple. Ezra 3:11 tells how God's people came from far and near, they laid the foundation for the rebuilding of God's house. The people were happy. The Bible says the singers sang and they played their instruments. They shouted, "His mercy endureth forever."

Stop and think how sinful you were, and the mercy of the Lord forgave you. Stop and think of the attitude we've had this week. Remember the things we've done we shouldn't have done. We can't forget the harsh words we've said when we should have been quiet. We are guilty of envy and covetousness and jealousy, and impatience without longsuffering--yet the dear Lord looks down from heaven and "His mercy endureth forever." Psalm 107:1 tells us, "His mercy endureth forever." In these psalms David remembers as he does in the 136th Psalm, "The seas were parted, for his mercy endureth forever. And Pharaoh's armies were drowned, for his mercy endureth forever. And he fed us with manna from heaven, for his mercy endureth forever. And he gave us water from the rock, for his mercy endureth forever..." Over and over again, the Psalmist remembers the blessing of the past.

Fourteen years ago today I didn't want to come to Hammond, Indiana. If I ever hated a city, it was Chicago. When I left Chicago, I said, "This is the last place in the world I'd ever want to live." God has put me here and now it looks as if this is going to be the last place in the world I'll ever live. I didn't want to come to Chicago. I quote a part of a poem to Jim Vineyard about once a week to keep him here.

I said, "Let me walk in the fields." He said, "No, walk in the town." I said, "But there are no flowers." He said, "No flowers, but a crown." I said, "But the air is thick with fog, and the fog is obscuring the sun," He said, "Souls are sick and they walk in darkness, undone."

Jim Vineyard comes to my office occasionally and says, "Quote that poem quick!" A fellow walked in my office this week and said, "Hey, Preacher--that poem that you quote Jim Vineyard--could you quote that to me?" He was serious. I said, "Why?" He said, "I was thinking about leaving this area and I need that poem, quick." We need to be reminded of God's leadership in our lives.

I didn't want to come to Hammond and we had battles. For a year--I mean for a year, it was hell. And yet, the victories! Oh, the goodness of God. Think of our preacher boys that stand in pulpits around this country and around the world this morning, proclaiming the same mercy that we proclaim from this pulpit. Think of the churches that have been changed, their ministries transformed and preachers set aflame with the gospel of Christ. Think of these 14 blessed years. Oh, we've had some heartaches. We had a fire that destroyed a building. We had to put our nurseries in the hallways of the educational building. We had to buy a furniture store and in one week we had to remodel it and put up temporary walls. We had to live in all kinds of inconvenience for a long time, but His mercy has endured forever. We've had people call us nuts, and we've had folks hate us. One man said, "I have to drive down Sibley Street to work, but I won't drive by your church." I said, "Why?" He said, "Every time I see your church, I see my liquor and my dirty sins and the life I live. The very presence of that building is a sermon against me." I said, "Thank God, even our buildings speak out against unrighteousness and for decency."

We've felt attacks and tried not to retaliate. That's one reason I think His mercy has been good. We've tried to love everybody. We've tried to be gracious and kind. No word has ever come from across the pulpit against any man of God, no matter what denomination. We've tried to stand for God's men and tried to call this country back to God. If any church in the whole world ought to say, "His mercy endures forever," we ought to stand up and shout the blessed praises of God.

The psalmist said it in Psalm 106 and 107 and 118, verse 1. As I read these verses I jumped up and down and I said, "Praise the Lord, His mercy endureth forever." God puts up with people like us. God uses people like us. God forgives people like us. God loves people like us. His mercy endureth forever.

Then again, you find in Jeremiah 33:11, "His mercy endureth forever." Jeremiah saw the coming kingdom. He saw the lion lying down with the lamb; he saw the little child leading a lion down the street. He saw the kingdom of righteousness and peace. And Jeremiah said, "Praise the Lord! Look what He has in the future for me! His mercy endureth forever."

Did you know God will be merciful to you as long as you live? When you young people get old, the mercy of the Lord will still endure. When you middle-aged people get toward the senior years, the mercy of the Lord will still endure. You dear people in your 70's and 80's and 90's, when most of life is over and you wonder about death and what it's like--I'll tell you what it's like. The mercy of the Lord will be there when you go through the valley of the shadow and when somebody sits at your bedside, waiting for you to go home to be with the Lord.

The young lady sang this morning about how she wants to see her father. I thought of her father, Bill Gifford, who helped us up in the baptismal room. He was a great man of God. When he was dying, I went to his bedside; he looked up at me and said, "Pastor, for me to live is Christ and to die is gain." Oh, when you come to the valley of the shadow, His mercy endureth forever. When cancer eats the body up--as it is

this morning for some people--His mercy endures forever. When you cross the chilly Jordan and go into the presence of our Lord, His mercy is just beginning. When we see Him, His mercy endures forever. when we rise to meet Him in the air, His mercy endureth forever. When we come back to earth with Him, His mercy endureth forever. When we walk the streets of gold and through the gates of pearl, His mercy endureth forever. When we've been with Him ten million years, His mercy endureth forever. That means, no matter what happens, God's mercy is there and will always be there.

In the future, God may allow squealing brakes, burning rubber on the pavement, crashing of steel, and bodies hurling into the culvert or on the shoulder of the road. It may be that God will allow you to lie there for awhile and wonder if you're going to die. It may be that God has a wheel chair for you as He does for this lady here. It may be that God is going to let you be deaf, like those folks back there. It may be that you'll never hear the voice of a whipporwill again, or the sweet music of the choir. But His mercy endures forever. It may be that God will allow pressures to come in your life. You may fall to the bottom of society and one day stumble into a rescue mission like some of these men here. But his mercy will endure forever.

You cannot get outside His mercy. You may go to the depth of the sea, but His mercy is there. You may go higher than man has ever gone, but His mercy is there. You may stumble into a tavern and give up your life and your virtue, but His mercy is always there. Why? His mercy endureth forever--that's why. God's mercy goes beyond your deepest sin, and beyond your loneliest hour. His mercy endureth forever.

You will recall the story of two men who came to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee and the other was a publican. The Pharisee said, "I am thankful I'm not as he is--I'm a good man. I don't commit all the dirty sins he commits, and I do good things he doesn't do." The publican could not so much as lift up his eyes to God. He smote his breast and said, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Listen to me this morning, are you here this morning and you're in sin; you don't know if you died you would go to heaven? His mercy endureth forever. This morning, God would save any person in this room that would look up to God and say, "O God, I know I'm a sinner, and I'm sorry. Be merciful to me, a sinner." The mercy of God would cove every sin of your life. His mercy endureth forever.

You say, "Are you sure?" Yes!!! Look at Ephesians 2:4. "God is rich in mercy." His mercy reaches out to you this morning.

Forty-four people came to my office for conferences, from 3:30 Friday afternoon until 11 o'clock last night. So many of our folks have needs. What about the many people who didn't come, but they also have needs? For everyone who came to my office, God's mercy endureth forever. For everyone who didn't come to my office, His mercy endureth forever.

There's a lady here this morning who wonders if life is worth living. Lady, His mercy endureth forever. There's a man here this morning with cancer eating up his body, and he wonders what the future holds. Sir, His mercy endureth forever. There's a young lady here this morning who deeply loves the man she married, but he's not been faithful to her. "Mam, His mercy endureth forever.

The word "endure" means nothing can stop it. It comes from a Greek word which means "to conquer." It means His mercy conquereth forever. So you have heartaches? his mercy conquereth heartaches. So you have sickness? his mercy conquereth sickness. So you go into sin? His mercy conquereth sin. His mercy conquereth forever. You can say, with the song writer, Dr. Weigle:

I would love to tell you what I think of Jesus, Since I found in Him a friend so strong and true. I would tell you how He changed my life completely; He did something that no other friend could do. No one ever cared for me like Jesus.

In the Weigle Music Center at Tennessee Temple College, they built a little apartment for Dr. Weigle. he was nearly 100 when it was finished. At the dedication, the Mayor came and cut the ribbon, and I preached the message. After everybody had gone, I decided to go see Dr. Weigle. I went to his room and started to knock on the door, but I heard a voice say, "Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!" I just listened to him shout for awhile. Finally, I knocked on the door. He came to the door, with the look of heaven on his face. I said, "Dr. Weigle, what are you doing?" He clapped his hands and said, "Just practicing for heaven!" We ought to practice for heaven this morning and praise the Lord a little bit. "Blessed be God!" "His mercy endureth forever!"

Go home today and have a meal--shout the praises of God. Say, "His mercy endureth forever." Reach up and touch your eyes. If you can see say, "Hallelujah! His mercy endureth forever!" If you can hear the sound of this beautiful music, say, "Glory to God! His mercy endureth forever." If you can walk out of this building without being rolled out in a wheel chair, say, "Praise the Lord! His mercy endureth forever." Or if you have to roll out in a wheel chair or walk out deaf or blind, or if you don't have food to eat, just jump up and down anyhow and say, "Hallelujah! His mercy endureth forever." Say it with me. "His mercy endureth forever." Forever, and ever, and ever.

When kingdoms have crumbled for the last time, His mercy endureth forever. When dictators have waged their wicked battles for the last time, His mercy endureth forever. When the stars have fallen like untimely figs from a tree shaken by the wind, His mercy endureth forever. When the sun refuses to shine and the moon has turned as black as sackcloth of hair, His mercy endureth forever. When people shall die no more and cemeteries shall not dot the horizon, His mercy endureth forever. When shoulders shall never stoop, nor brows wrinkle, nor faces become furrowed, His mercy endureth forever. When all of us awake in His likeness to live forever around His throne, His mercy endureth forever. Blessed be God! His mercy endureth forever!

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