

The Steadfast Love of God

Psalm 13

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

How long must I take counsel in my soul

and have sorrow in my heart all the day?

How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

Consider and answer me, O Lord my God;

light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,

lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him,"

lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.

But **I have trusted in your steadfast love;**

my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

I will sing to the Lord,

because he has dealt bountifully with me.

I have trusted in your steadfast love.

The Hebrew word translated "steadfast love" is the word *chesed*. It is a rich and deep word whose meaning is hard to fully capture in English. Other English translations render its meaning as *mercy*, *unfailing love*, *lovingkindness*, and *faithful love*. And they're all correct! It means all of the above, *and more*. For God is all of the above, and more. It is God's wholly and completely undeserved love and mercy for all people, for all sinners, for you and me. Why would He care about us at all? Because of His *chesed*. Because He IS *chesed*.

Some people think that if God is love, if God is *chesed*, then bad things shouldn't happen to me. But this is still a sinful world, and we are still sinful people, so bad things still happen. David was in anguish, and often, so are

we.

So how good to know that we have a God we can go to, that we can turn to for help. Who knows what we're going through and so knows how to help.

Yes, He knows, for God came down from heaven and went through the trials and struggles with us. Actually He went through much more than we ever will. When St. Paul wrote to Titus, he wrote this: *But when the goodness and **loving kindness** of God our Savior appeared, he saved us . . .* (Titus 3:4-5). Paul is saying that the loving kindness of God (one of the translations of *chesed* above) appeared in our world - it was Jesus! And He appeared to save us from whatever is not *chesed*.

It was not easy. When He was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, just mere hours before He would be hung on the cross, you can imagine Him praying these words with us. But He knows His Father is *chesed*, and that strengthens Him and enables Him to face the cross.

And the steadfast love of the Lord, His *chesed*, strengthens you, too. To face whatever is bringing you grief or worry. The *chesed* of the Lord means that we do not face these struggles alone, and that His forgiveness is always there for us. We have confidence that just as the Lord came to be our Saviour, so He is with us still as our Saviour. So that even when faced with suffering, loss, or death, we can say with David and Jesus and countless Christians throughout the ages: *I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.*

Indeed. For the *chesed* of the Lord endures forever (Psalm 136).

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your chesed - Your unfailing, unfathomable mercy and love that would cause You to come down from heaven and be my Saviour. When I am anguished or troubled, help me to pray this psalm and remember that You have not left me, but are here with me. And help me look forward to the day when all sin and struggle will end, and I will dwell with You and in Your eternal chesed forever. Amen.