



# Psalm 136

Psalm 136 Mark 9:30-32

March 1, 2020

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The word *Antiphon* means *responsive* .... it comes from two Greek words that mean “return | sound”. It is mainly a liturgical word to describe the *responsive readings* in a worship service. Today, we have a Psalm that was used in Old Testament worship as an *Antiphon*. Take a look at Psalm 136 on the handout.

The refrain of the Psalm is “for His steadfast love endures forever!” It is repeated 26 times and is the major theme of the Psalm. The refrain is the part that the people say, after the priest said the first part of each verse. That interaction between the priest and the people is the *antiphon* part of this Psalm – it’s a *responsive reading*. Whether the people sang it or spoke it, it is a powerful confession of God’s goodness, grace, and mercy.

In this Psalm, we are **giving thanks** for God’s **steadfast love**. In the Old Testament, this word **steadfast love** captures all of God’s grace, mercy, kindness, and goodness to His people. It is frequently translated as loving-kindness. **Steadfast love** is a gospel word: God’s **steadfast love** lasts forever!

In the Psalm, God’s **steadfast love** is seen in *Creation* and in the *Exodus*. Let’s start with the *Creation*.

Take a look at the Psalm 136 handout; and look at verses 4-9. Let’s read them *antiphonally*; like they would have in the Old Testament times.

*God of the Exodus*

10 to him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!  
11 and brought Israel out from among them,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!  
12 with a strong hand and an outstretched arm,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!  
13 to him who divided the Red Sea in two,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!  
14 and made Israel pass through the midst of it,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!  
15 but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!  
16 to him who led his people through the wilderness,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!  
17 to him who struck down great kings,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!  
18 and killed mighty kings,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!  
19 Sihon, king of the Amorites,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!  
20 and Og, king of Bashan,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!  
21 and gave their land as a heritage,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!  
22 a heritage to Israel his servant,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

God's mighty power and wisdom created the heavens and the earth and everything in them. *Creation* is a sign of God's **steadfast love** towards you! When you see a beautiful sunset or enjoy some wonder of *Creation*, be sure to see God's love in it; His love for you! Not only that, but God has created your own body and soul as well! Your *Creator* sustains you and provides for you; He defends you and watches over your life! Your *Creator* personally knows you. And through faith in Christ, you know the *Creator*! You know His mighty power and wisdom is at work on your behalf. You acknowledge that He has *Created* your body and soul, your eyes ears and all your members, any He still preserves them. You believe and confess that He provides for you and watches over you. Through faith in Christ, you know your *Creator*! *Creation* is a sign of God's **steadfast love** towards you!

On a side note, don't be deceived by the world and misled by *evolution*. If you are toying with the idea of *evolution*, then you are turning your back on God's love, and are on the verge of denying the One, True, and Only God. This Psalm makes a direct connection between the *Creator* and His

## Psalm 136

1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

2 Give thanks to the God of gods,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

3 Give thanks to the Lord of lords,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

*God The Creator*

4 to Him who alone does great wonders,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

5 To him who by understanding made the heavens,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

6 to him who spread out the earth above the waters,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

7 to him who made the great lights,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

8 the sun to rule over the day,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

9 the moon and stars to rule over the night,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

*God of the Exodus*

10 to him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

11 and brought Israel out from among them,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

12 with a strong hand and an outstretched arm,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

13 to him who divided the Red Sea in two,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

14 and made Israel pass through the midst of it,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

15 but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

16 to him who led his people through the wilderness,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

17 to him who struck down great kings,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

18 and killed mighty kings,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

19 Sihon, king of the Amorites,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

20 and Og, king of Bashan,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

21 and gave their land as a heritage,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

22 a heritage to Israel his servant,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

*God is compassionate to all of us*

23 It is he who remembered us in our low estate,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

24 and rescued us from our foes,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

25 he who gives food to all flesh,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

26 Give thanks to the God of heaven,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

**steadfast love.** Don't be deceived by the world and misled by *evolution*. *It is nothing other than the Satanic attack and temptation to lead you away from God's steadfast love for you.* Evolution is a denial of God and His **steadfast love!** God *Created* the heavens and the earth in six 24-hour days and rested on the seventh; He created your body and soul, and daily provides for you! God's work of *Creation* is a constant reminder of His **steadfast love** for you!

Not only does *Creation* show God's **steadfast love** for you; but so does the great *Exodus* of the Old Testament. Take a look at verses 10-22 on the Psalm 136 handout; Let's read them *antiphonally* like they would have in the Old Testament times.

*God The Creator*

4 to Him who alone does great wonders,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

5 To him who by understanding made the heavens,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

6 to him who spread out the earth above the waters,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

7 to him who made the great lights,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

8 the sun to rule over the day,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

9 the moon and stars to rule over the night,  
for His steadfast love endures forever!

God's **steadfast love** is seen in the *Exodus*, the great salvation story of the Old Testament. God's mercy and compassion for His people led Him to send Moses to the Israelites; to defeat Pharaoh and his army; and to lead His people through the Red Sea, to Mount Sinai, and ultimately to the Promised Land. In the *Exodus*, God watched over the Israelites: forgiving them, protecting them, providing for them, and guiding them. God's **steadfast love** is seen in the *Exodus*, the great salvation story of the Old Testament.

The great Old Testament *Exodus* points us forward to the greatest demonstration of the God's **steadfast love**: *the cross of Christ*. On *the cross of Christ*, God's **steadfast love** was for all people; every man, woman, and child is now set free from their sins by the death of Christ. **YOU ARE INCLUDED!** Jesus took your place on that cross when He died! On *the cross of Christ*, God proves His love, mercy and grace to you. He gave up His Son so that you would live with Him forever. Jesus's death and resurrection is our *Exodus* → where we escape slavery to sin, pass through the waters of Holy Baptism, are made God's people! God now watches over us – like He did the Israelites: forgiving us, protecting us, providing for us, and guiding us through life to the Promise Land of

Heaven! Gods **steadfast love** for you is seen most clearly in *the cross of Christ!* Like the Israelites of the Old Testament times, we too have reason to confess: "God's steadfast love endures forever!"

One of the things that Psalm 136 teaches us is quite personal. It teaches us that we are to look back in our lives and see how God has worked in the past. In the Psalm, the Israelites' looked back to *Creation* and the *Exodus*. When you look back over your life, you can see God's fingerprints *everywhere*; those are signs of God's love and care in your life! God has worked personally with you throughout your life with His **steadfast love**.

When you realize that God has made everything in your life work for your good; and when you see God's good hand guiding and leading you in the past; and when you understand that God has forgiven you, protected you, defended you, and provided for you in the past, then you are strengthened in faith to trust God for today and whatever happens tomorrow. Psalm 136 teaches us to look back and see God at work in our lives; and to know that the Lord's steadfast love endures forever!

Today is the first Sunday in Lent. We are on a 40 day journey, that began last week with Ash Wednesday. This journey will lead us to Holy Week: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday. It's a time to remember our Savior's **steadfast love** for us in His suffering, crucifixion, and death.

Using Psalm 136 as a guide, I created a *Lenten Psalm* to get us started in this Lenten journey.

## A Lenten Psalm

PATTERNED AFTER PSALM 136

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is merciful  
*His steadfast love endures forever!*

To the King who rode a colt into Jerusalem  
*His steadfast love endures forever!*

To our Great High Priest who prayed  
with loud cries and tears in Gethsemane  
*His steadfast love endures forever!*

To the Good Shepherd  
who was betrayed for 30 pieces of silver  
*His steadfast love endures forever!*

To Immanuel who was arrested without cause  
*His steadfast love endures forever!*

To our Judge who was judged, condemned,  
and suffered under Pontius Pilate  
*His steadfast love endures forever!*

To the Lion of the Tribe of Judah who was  
mistreated by the elders, chief priests, and scribes  
*His steadfast love endures forever!*

To our Redeemer who wore a crown of thorns  
*His steadfast love endures forever!*

To our Brother who was denied by a friend  
*His steadfast love endures forever!*

To God who was mocked, beaten, and spit upon  
*His steadfast love endures forever!*

To Jesus who was savagely scourged and flogged  
*His steadfast love endures forever!*

To the Savior who was crucified in our place  
*His steadfast love endures forever!*

To our Lord who was buried in a stranger's tomb  
*His steadfast love endures forever!*

To Son of God who rose from the dead on the third day  
*His steadfast love endures forever!*

To the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world  
*His steadfast love endures forever!*

To the Lord Jesus Christ who declares us righteous  
*His steadfast love endures forever!*

Give thanks to the Lord for He is good  
*His steadfast love endures forever!*



It's on the backside of the handout that has Psalm 136 on it. Let's read it *antiphonally!*

**Lord God, our creator and Redeemer, we thank You for Your steadfast love that never fails. We thank You that we can see Your compassion and mercy at work in our own lives. Help us to be confident in Your love, eager to confess Your goodness, and bold to live as Your people. As the season of Lent has begun, help us to faithfully proclaim that Your steadfast love endures forever in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, Amen!**