

Enduring Love

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[0 : 00] Thank you, Olivia. It's not often you get your daughter to pray for you before you start to speak. So that is a bit of a new one for me.

I just want to say just a few things about the relationship the church has here with Brunnsfield. I was thinking how far it went back. Many, many years ago, just after we were married, and we've been married for 35 years, we entertained Archie Naismith for a full day.

It's not things that young couples do nowadays in church because you kind of get them off their Xbox until they're about 40. But we entertained Archie for a full day. And then at night time, an elder said to me, can you give Archie a run to the station?

And the rain was coming down. It was dark. I said, you can't ask Archie to go on the train and go back to Edinburgh. So I said, Archie, I'll take you back to Edinburgh. I said, on the one proviso, I need to be back pretty sharp.

So Archie held on with grim fear and death all the way to Edinburgh. And I obviously noticed it was his son here. So if I made any impact on his life by my driving across here and back, then I apologise.

[1 : 17] We have a connection with the church here, really on a few fronts. I was introduced to Graham through my son. My son went to Christians in Sport.

And that's where he met Graham. I then met Graham at a place I was going to see under our eyes, met across the table, but that wouldn't sound too good. But I was introduced to Graham.

And then I contacted Graham about coming to speak at the church. Graham then said, well, we have actually a team of young men who would like to maybe try out and use their gifting coming to speak.

And so I think we're about to approach our third session now, about 12 individuals coming to preach to us at Liberty. We're a small church in Bellsill in quite a difficult socioeconomic area.

We are about 35, 40. We'd meet on a Sunday. So it has been good just to have different speakers coming from Edinburgh. And now we've drafted in Chalmers Church as well with some of their speakers to come and speak to us.

[2 : 27] So it has been good. And I've got to know some of the guys. I see Stuart there. And hopefully they have felt the benefit of coming through and speaking to us.

That's just a wee bit about that. Psalm 118. I don't know if when you were at school you had a favourite subject. Mine was pretty obvious what my favourite subject was.

I love PE. But a close second, a close second was English. And one of the things I loved about English was, and maybe you can empathise with me, is sometimes when you read a passage you thought to yourself, what is that all about?

Not that noise, but what is that passage all about? The poem, the Shakespeare. What does Shakespeare mean when it says, oh, that this tutu, solid flesh, would melt thorn, resolve itself into a Jew, et cetera, et cetera.

And I'd be like, what is that all about? And I used to love it when the English teacher would take their time and explain it and go through it and bring what is going on in the text.

[3 : 43] And in some ways, if you read Psalm 118, as I read it after Graham said, would you speak on Psalm 118? It was one of these ones, I accepted the challenge before I read the passage.

That's a mistake. And I'm normally a three-point alliteration man from the New Testament, but Psalm 118 is different.

And it took me time to go through it and to read it and to study it. It comes at the end of a series that you are working through.

It is rich in so many areas. It was a favourite of Martin Luther. If you know him, who was the great reformer, he had etched on the wall of the castle that he had been kidnapped and kept safe in. I will not die, verse 17. I will not die, but live and proclaim what the Lord has done. He has chastened me severely, but he has not given me over to death. And he held on to that.

[4 : 49] And you might have read some of the verses there today and thought to yourself, I can empathise with that. I can hold on to that. And thank Fiona for the songs that you picked.

You'd obviously read the passage and picked the songs in relation to that. It's part of the series of Psalms from 113 through to 118.

It's a long psalm. It took quite a wee bit of reading there, but it's not as long as the next one, which is particularly long. I was thinking if I had that, I would have just been able to read it through and sit down.

But Psalm 118 is a rich, rich passage. It's a liturgical psalm. We don't do liturgy much in church. You know, when you say, what do I mean by that? Well, there's a response here. There's a presenter presenting and there's a response from the individuals or from the congregation.

[5 : 52] And the clue is very often in the first part, there's a colon and there's inverted commas. And that's our response. And I'm going to try and develop that as we go through the passage.

It's a psalm that was probably written by David at the top of normally the psalms, it would say written by the sons of Korah, written by Asaph, written by David. But there is none here.

But most clever people say that it's been written by David. And I want to kind of take up that theme that was written by David.

If you're writing a psalm like this and the words that come out, what you see is what is in the man. And by the man's experience and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the words are written down.

I love old songs. One of my favourites. The winner takes it all. We play it when you lose at sport. But it's obviously a song that is written from someone's heartache.

[7 : 07] And you can feel the heartache as you listen to it. But when David writes, he writes richly from his own experience. He writes from what has happened to him.

And through God, and through God's Holy Spirit, the truth of that comes out to minister to us today. I thought of just an old, not an old hymn, I knew hymn actually.

Normally I think of old hymns. But I thought of, just as I was reading it this week, I thought of a modern hymn. And over this, Psalm 118, the words that came to me were, I love you, I love you, Lord.

Your mercy never fails. All my days have been held in your hands. From the moment that I wake up until I lay my head, I will sing of the goodness of God.

And it's a summary. That's a summary. And that's what Psalm 118 is like. That's the outline for today. I'm going to just spend a wee bit more on intro, because intro is quite important in this passage.

[8 : 16] I've started in my old age to read a book. The book is called The Inner Game of Golf, believe it or not. It's not a deep book, but it's called The Inner Game of Golf.

And it says, how do you understand this game? I've been struggling about it for years, but how do you get to the nub of it?

And it tries to simplify it. Not too complicated, not technical, but tries to simplify it. And that's what I thought, as I'm looking at this, and I'm looking at the life of David, and how he could write this.

I started to read. I thought, as background reading, I thought, I am going to read about the life of David. Because if you're going to write this in Psalm 118, what made you write it?

And I want to look at that a wee bit today. What made him write it? And I took an old Bible that I had, and I were on holiday, and as I came to a key phrase, I underlined it.

[9 : 25] I underlined it. I underlined it. And I realized there was a pattern. There was a pattern to David's life that had never struck me before.

And I'm going to just tell you some of the texts. 1 Samuel 23, verse 2, says, David inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go and attack? 1 Samuel 23, verse 4.

Once again David inquired of the Lord, and the Lord answered him. 1 Samuel 30, And David inquired of the Lord, Shall I pursue this raiding party?

Pursue them, he answered. And so it goes on, through David's life. 2 Samuel 2, In the course of time, David inquired of the Lord, Shall I go up to the towns of Judah?

2 Samuel 5, 19, So David inquired of the Lord. 2 Samuel 5, 23, So David inquired of the Lord. You got any idea?

[10:28] David spent his time, and before he made a decision, inquired of the Lord. He kept doing it.

He kept repeating it. He had a relationship with the Lord that was a close relationship. We hear about David in 1 Samuel 13, as well, where Samuel says, Saul, you're no longer chosen. But, this is what Samuel says to Saul, But now your kingdom will not endure. The Lord has sought a man out after his own heart, and be appointed a ruler of his people.

David's not dipping in and out with the relationship of God. He's not appearing one Sunday, disappearing for, going to his caravan the next week, disappearing for a holiday, then appearing again in week 4 and 5.

He's not missing coming together for communion. He's not missing the prayer meeting. He's not missing any of that. Why? Because he had a close relationship with God.

[11:42] He was a man after God's own heart. So the summary of David is this. He was a man after God's own heart. He dedicated himself to the relationship with God.

It also tells us that the spirit of the Lord was on him. And also, he was very gifted. I missed that bit out, but my wife in her Bible has underlined, and David was ruddy and handsome in appearance, but he had the genes as well.

And when God is a man like that, it is incredible what he can do. And he uses David to be able to do this. Verse 1, Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

His love endures forever. It starts with that. It finishes with that. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.

You could spend an eternity on those verses alone. One of my pet hates, and my wife will tell you, is this.

[12:51] Someone on Facebook is in their holiday in Mauritius, and they put, God is good. They have a new car, and they write, God is good.

That's taking his name in vain. We border on prosperity, gospel, when we associate these things. God is good, whatever your circumstances.

Whatever you've been blessed with or not blessed with, that doesn't determine if God is good. Despite our circumstances, God is always good, and his love endures forever.

Another hymn says, Blessed be your name in the land that is plentiful, where your streams of abundance flow. Blessed be your name. Blessed be your name when I'm found in the desert place, though I'm walking through the wilderness.

Blessed be your name. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever. And then verses 2 to 4, don't worry, I'll take some big chunks that time it says, Let Israel say, His love endures forever.

[14:13] Let the house of Aaron say, His love endures forever. Let those who fear the Lord say, His love endures forever. Let those of Brunsfield say, He does.

And when you look at the individuals who are saying this, let Israel say, Israel, the nation, had been promised a covenant relationship with God. They failed, came back, were restored.

They failed, came back, were restored. They failed, came back, restored. God takes them back time and time and time again. Let me tell you, you will sing, His love endures forever.

Let the house of Aaron say, His love endures forever. That was the priesthood. They went in and out. They understood God's great love, God's great forgiveness.

But as individuals, I'm going to refer back to a story in David's life. David had to go to the priesthood and he had to ask them for bread.

[15:17] And he asked them for bread. They had only the showbread that was there to be used in worship. And they gave him the showbread. That meant their death. Because Saul heard about it and he came with one of his hitmen and his hitmen killed all the prophets.

They killed everyone in the town. They killed all children, wives, cattle, everyone. Now David is on the throne and they remember what happened to them.

And they can sing, His love endures forever. Those who fear the Lord say His love endures forever. And then we consider maybe the next section which is in verse 5 through to verse 9.

When we look at it we realise that we move from the love of God to anguish. I thought that's a strange step, isn't it? To move from the love of God to the anguish in your life.

Verse 5, in anguish I cried to the Lord. He answered me by setting me free or bringing me to a broad or a spacious place. David has been chased all over the place.

[16:40] He's been chased into caves. He actually stays with the enemy. He's been chased by his son. All sorts of things. He's chased all over the place and he has been confined to so many places.

But he then says I cried to the Lord and he answered me by bringing me to a spacious place. A few years ago I suffered with claustrophobia because of a thyroid issue.

And we were in a caravan in St Andrews and let me tell you that was tough. It was small. It was tough.

But then to get outside to be along the east of the west sands with the wind in my hair which I had then it was a great feeling to be brought to a spacious place.

To be walking on the beach to be walking in the glen when you've been tied up in small spaces.

David says he's brought me to a spacious place.

[17:48] You can also say the Lord is with me. The Lord is my helper. The Lord is my refuge. I will not be afraid. I thought how wonderful that must have been for people like Gideon and Moses and David to know when they go into battle as well they know that the Lord is with them.

That's a message that came out in the songs. The Lord is with me. The Lord is with me. The Lord is with me. And I come up with this myself.

When we walk with the Lord when we walk with the Lord in times of trouble we run to the Lord. The two things go together. When we walk with the Lord in times of trouble we will run to the Lord and he knew this.

the Lord was with him through the good times through the bad times when he had to take refuge when he was on the run always there and he knew that he was going to win.

Wouldn't that be incredible? Anything you do you know you're going to win. It's a great feeling to know you're going to win. I remember it being a primary school. You know how they used to pick teams if you're playing football.

[19:03] I knew if I got a chap called Adam Gibson in my team I would not lose ever. Why? Because he was a star.

He was incredible. Any side he played in he never lost. David knew the secret of the victory that would come because he had the Lord on his side.

Then we have the victory of the Lord. There's a pattern to it. I'm going to read it. You can hear the liturgy of the response. All the nations surrounded me.

Listen to this. But in the name of the Lord I cut them off. They surrounded me on every side but in the name of the Lord I cut them off. They swarmed around me like bees. They died out as quickly as burning thorns but in the name of the Lord I cut them off.

You see the secret? The secret is the name of the Lord. The name of the Lord. And that's not if you read the Bible and you read particularly the Old Testament it's more than just having the name in your shirt.

[20:11] It's more than going out there and saying I'm a member of Brunfield or handing out your tracks or whatever you do. It's more than that. The name of the Lord means something immense.

When you read about someone's name in the Old Testament you'll read the name Benjamin means son of my right hand. You read Eve as the mother of all living.

You read Methuselah when he's gone at his scent. When you read about Joseph naming his sons God has made me forget my despair. It means something. Your name in the Old Testament means something.

And when you come and you use and David uses the name of the Lord it means something. something bigger than just saying in Jesus' name.

Something bigger than all these things. Because in the Old Testament we realize that God explains his character. God explains his name time and time again.

[21:13] He explains it to Moses and Moses comes time and time again and God says to him in a particular instance God's name means.

And then again in Exodus 34 God's name is more than just appearing with the name on your shirt. We're told to worship it. We're told to praise it. We're told to fear it. And when we read the Old Testament we read that he is God Almighty he is Elohim he is the creator he is a provider he is Jehovah Jireh he is Jehovah Nessie he is the Lord is my banner he is Jehovah Rafa the Lord who restores it's a study on its own and when David comes for the victory he knows that when he is

done he is inquired he knows the Lord is with him and he goes out in the name of the Lord. There's a particular instance in David's life and you know the instance David stands before Goliath it's a bit like the two boxers do you know I'm not really a boxing fan but the thing about boxing I like I like the beginning I like the end I like it pre-fight you know the pre-fight thing when they all walk up and they go like that you know I don't know what that's about but that's what they do and then they tell one another what they're going to do to each other well David was in that situation with Goliath Goliath says when David goes out to fight him I am a dog that you come to me with sticks and the Philistine cursed David come here he said and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air then it's David's turn it's his turn so he puffs out his chest and he says David said you come against me with a sword and spear and javelin but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty the God of the armies whom you have defied and then he and then he tells him what he's going to do with him after he has killed him that's confidence but he's not there on his own David knew that the name of the Lord was more than just going and saying oh this is God speaking it is the weight of God's character the weight of who he is the weight of his power and it says I cut them off victory verse 13 to 17 very simply David gives the credit to God all the time it's God who's given him the victory it's not him and when you read in verse 13 to 17 it says but the Lord helped me the Lord has become my salvation the Lord's right hand has done mighty things the Lord's right hand is lifted high the Lord's right hand has done mighty things this is where my mind goes way off the boxing thing comes back I love it when the referee raises the hand of the winning boxer and David says

[24 : 46] I am raising the hand of the winning boxer and the winning boxer is God's right hand the right hand that was classed as coordination power strength magnificence and he says the Lord has done it David knew as well talks about anguish in one of those other verses as you read down but the anguish that has come about being chastised severely but has not given me over to death David knew what it was like he knew what it was like to be chased by Saul he knew what it was like for Nathan the prophet to come to him and say you are the man that has been caught in adultery he knew what it was like to have his son taken from him because of his sin he was chastised he knew what it was like to be chased by his other son

Absalom but he knew what it was like to feel the pain of Absalom's death and he knew that God was chastening him he wasn't perfect but he knew there was always a way back Psalm 51 have mercy on me according to your unfailing love there's always a way back no matter where you've gone to and David knew it and then you have the bursting of praise you're going to see brilliant verse 19 right the way through to 29 the bursting of praise it's like David is going through this celebration and he's getting up to the temple and finishes and give thanks to the Lord for he is good I don't know if you've seen this on Facebook or something like it you might see a couple of girls there or you might see the face of a man sometimes you can't see it and you need to screw up your eyes just to be able to see it but it's a picture of two things but you can see the picture of a man can you just flick on to the next one depends on how you look at this one you might not see it you might see it you might see the word

Jesus you might not see it depends your angle depends as you see in Glasgow if your eyes are scaly or they're not scaly but you can see it right and it would be wrong to move on from Psalm 118 not to see Jesus it tells us that in Matthew 26 that when Jesus had finished the institution of the Lord's Supper when he had finished the Passover feast it says they sung a hymn out to the Mount of Olives Jesus is singing this hymn before he goes to the cross this is probably the last song Jesus sang before he went to the cross Jesus quotes from this psalm himself Matthew 21 Jesus says have you read the scriptures the stone the builders rejected has become the corner stone the Lord has done marvellous things in our eyes that's verse 22 Jesus quotes again in Mark 12 quotes again in Luke 20 Peter quotes it in Acts 4 Paul alludes to it in Ephesians 2 Peter speaks of it in 1st Peter it is the most quoted text in the New Testament that he has become their corner stone he was rejected by the builders he was rejected because they didn't approve of his origin they didn't approve of his education they didn't approve his rejection of traditions or they didn't approve of his friends but Jesus says it that he has become the corner stone the thing which in a building is the foundation which lines are drawn from and everything is built on he has become the corner stone building together Jew and Gentile God and man time and eternity earth and heaven he has done he is the corner stone verse 19 you can also you have pictures of

Palm Sunday they are save us or grant us success Hosanna blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord verse 25 26 we hear it we see it we can see the picture of Jesus but as Jesus sang these words I just wondered how he felt this holy ground how did he feel the Lord is on my help the Lord is on my side to help me I shall look in triumph on those who hate me as Jesus picked his trial imagine singing it is better take refuge in the Lord than to put your trust in man knowing that all his disciples would desert him consider him singing all nations have surrounded me but in the name of the Lord I cut them off they swarmed around me like bees would the bees do bees sting Christ would have the stinging whip on his back he would have the gouging out of his flesh the crown of thorns would be stinging his brow this was like a swarm of bees that

[30 : 25] Jesus would be feeling the sting on his body old time says what he endured no tongue can tell to save our souls from death and hell can you imagine Jesus singing I was about to fall as he carries his cross can you imagine him in the upper room singing the Lord is my strength he has become my salvation can you hear him singing the Lord has chastened me severely but he has not given me over to death can you imagine him singing this is the day that the Lord has made when he knows what is going to happen to happen to him but he could still say give thanks to the Lord for he is good his love endures forever because he would then say father into your hands I commend my spirit so the challenge for us today it's easy to look at a passage like this and see it as intellectual see it as the life of

David and his experience see it as the life of Jesus and his immense experience both trusting God both coming down and saying God is on my side God is my refuge God is my strength and through their lives but the psalms are personal and this is where the message comes home to us to say is it going to work from my ears to my head to my heart and how I live that's the challenge of the Bible how can I make it live out in my life I don't know where you are today I don't know if you feel battered and bruised but I do know when you go to his word if you have a relationship with him you can realize that he is with you I leave with one challenge and it's the challenge of this verse here verse 14 the

Lord is my strength and my song he has become my salvation future it's a future tense as David speaks he has become my salvation you know the word of salvation the word is Yeshua do you know what Jesus name is Yeshua when we go to the New Testament Jesus you shall call his name Jesus because he will save his people from the sin and the challenge today for us is we can have the same relationship that David had we can have the same trust if we make him our salvation the Lord is my strength the Lord is my song he has become my salvation he has become my Jesus the love of the

Lord endures forever give thanks to the Lord for he is good his love endures forever our father we thank you for your word we thank you for the fact that it speaks into our lives it's not to be kept on a distant shelf but it's to come home it's personal help us father to lean heavily on your word to lean heavily on you to realize the Lord is a refuge and our strength and our salvation father I thank you for that I thank you for being my salvation for dealing with my sin to make me stand before you perfect because of what Christ has done I thank you for our lovely Lord Jesus I just pray that today we would realize the sacrifice that he made understand it in some small way a bit more but help this word to change our lives help it to change my lives for

I pray in his name in the strong name and the precious name Amen