

Psalms 118:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Analysis

O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good (הודו ליהוה כִּי־טוֹב, hodu la-YHWH ki-tov)—Yadah means give thanks, praise; tov means good, pleasant, beneficial. **For his mercy endureth for ever** (כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד, ki le-olam chasdo)—Chesed means steadfast love, covenant loyalty, mercy; olam means forever, eternity.

Psalms 118 begins (v. 1) and ends (v. 29) with identical words, forming an inclusio—a literary envelope. This refrain appears repeatedly in Scripture (Psalm 106:1, 107:1, 136:1, 1 Chronicles 16:34, 2 Chronicles 5:13, Ezra 3:11). It's Israel's foundational confession: God's character is good, and his covenant love never fails. Despite circumstances, this remains true. The repetition teaches us to begin and end with gratitude grounded in God's unchanging nature.

Historical Context

This refrain was sung antiphonally—one group singing the call ("give thanks"), another the response ("for his mercy endures forever"). It accompanied ark processions, temple dedications, and festival worship. When exiles returned, they sang this refrain while laying the temple foundation (Ezra 3:10-11), weeping and shouting simultaneously.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does framing your prayers and worship with thanksgiving (beginning and ending) transform your perspective?
2. What evidence in your life confirms that God's steadfast love endures forever?
3. How does God's goodness and eternal mercy provide foundation when circumstances seem to contradict it?

Interlinear Text

הוֹדוּ	לַיהוָה	כִּי	טוֹב	כִּי	לְעוֹלָם
O give thanks	unto the LORD	H3588	for he is good	H3588	endureth for ever
H3034	H3068		H2896		H5769
חַסְדּוֹ:					
for his mercy					
H2617					

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 103:17 (Grace): But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;

Psalms 118:1 (Grace): O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever.

Ezra 3:11 (Grace): And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel.

And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD,
because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

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