

Psalm 138:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.

Analysis

The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands. This concluding verse of Psalm 138 moves from past and present experience to future confidence. David expresses assurance that God will complete what He has begun, anchoring this confidence in God's enduring mercy and appealing to God's commitment to His own work.

"The LORD will perfect" (יהה יגמר/Yahweh yigmor) from gamar means to complete, accomplish, finish, bring to perfection. The imperfect tense indicates future certainty: God will complete what He has begun. This doesn't mean life will be easy or trouble-free, but that God's purposes will ultimately be fulfilled. What God starts, He finishes.

"That which concerneth me" (בָּעֵד/ba'adi) literally means "for me" or "on my behalf." This personalizes God's work—not abstract divine purposes but specific plans concerning David's life. God has purposes for each believer, plans He is working to accomplish (Jeremiah 29:11). These purposes concern our sanctification, service, and ultimate glorification.

"Thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever" (יהה חסדך לעולם/Yahweh chasdekha le'olam) provides the foundation for confidence. Chesed (mercy/lovingkindness) is God's covenant love, His steadfast loyal love, His unfailing commitment to His

people. Le'olam means forever, perpetually, eternally. This phrase appears as a refrain throughout Psalm 136, repeated 26 times. God's covenant love doesn't fluctuate with circumstances or depend on human faithfulness—it endures forever, unchanging and reliable.

"Forsake not the works of thine own hands" (אל-תְּرֵף מְעַשֵּׂיךְ /al-teref ma'asei yadekha) is both appeal and confidence. Raphah means to let go, abandon, forsake, leave. David appeals to God not to abandon what He has made. The phrase "works of thine own hands" acknowledges that believers are God's workmanship, His creation, His handiwork. Psalm 100:3 declares: "Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves."

This appeal reflects confidence in God's character. A craftsman doesn't abandon his masterpiece halfway through. A father doesn't abandon his children. God who began the work will complete it, not because of our worthiness but because of His unchanging love and commitment to His own work.

Historical Context

This confidence that God will perfect His work reflects covenant theology throughout Scripture. God's covenant with Abraham promised descendants, land, and blessing to all nations (Genesis 12:1-3). Though Abraham and his descendants often failed, God remained faithful to His covenant. His purposes were accomplished not through human effort but through divine faithfulness.

The concept of being the work of God's hands appears throughout Scripture. Isaiah 64:8 declares: "But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand." Ephesians 2:10 teaches: "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

The refrain "His mercy endureth for ever" appears 41 times in the Old Testament, most notably throughout Psalm 136. This was Israel's great confidence—when everything else failed, when they proved faithless, when circumstances seemed hopeless, God's covenant love remained steadfast. This sustained them through

Egyptian slavery, wilderness wandering, Canaanite opposition, cycles of rebellion and judgment, Assyrian threat, Babylonian exile, and Persian domination.

Paul applies this principle explicitly in Philippians 1:6: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." The God who began salvation will complete it. He who justified will also glorify (Romans 8:30). The author of our faith is also its finisher (Hebrews 12:2).

This doesn't mean believers can be passive or presumptuous. Philippians 2:12-13 commands: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." God's perfecting work includes human cooperation, yet ultimately depends on divine power, not human effort.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What does it mean that God will 'perfect' that which concerns you, and how does this provide confidence during incomplete or difficult circumstances?
2. How does understanding that you are the 'work of God's hands' affect your sense of identity, purpose, and security?
3. What is the relationship between God's promise to complete His work (Philippians 1:6) and the believer's responsibility to 'work out your salvation' (Philippians 2:12)?
4. How does God's enduring mercy (chesed) differ from human affection or commitment, and why is this distinction important?
5. When have you been tempted to doubt God would complete what He began in your life, and how does this verse speak to such doubts?

Interlinear Text

וְיִגְמַרְתִּי	בְּעֵד	הַנָּה	וְיִגְמַרְתִּי	מִסְדָּר
O LORD	will perfect	H1157	O LORD	that which concerneth me thy mercy
H3068	H1584		H3068	H2617
לְעוֹלָם	מִפְעָשׂ	בְּצָבָא	אֶל	תַּرְכָּה
endureth for ever	not the works	of thine own hands	forsake	
H5769	H4639	H3027	H408	H7503

Additional Cross-References

Philippians 1:6 (Parallel theme): Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

Psalms 57:2 (Parallel theme): I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me.

1 Thessalonians 5:24 (Parallel theme): Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

Isaiah 26:12 (References Lord): LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.

Psalms 136:1 (Grace): O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

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;

1 Peter 4:19 (Parallel theme): Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

Isaiah 43:21 (Parallel theme): This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.

Isaiah 42:16 (Parallel theme): And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light

before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

Psalms 100:5 (Grace): For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

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