

# Psalms 33:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.

## Analysis

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The psalm concludes with prayer request based on preceding theology: '**Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us**'. This is petition, not presumption—requesting what God has promised. The chesed (mercy, lovingkindness, covenant loyalty) is God's faithful love that never fails. Lamentations 3:22-23 celebrates, 'It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.' Believers don't deserve mercy but rely entirely on divine grace. The request 'be upon us' uses alenu (upon, over, concerning)—asking God's mercy to rest on, cover, and encompass His people.

The qualifying phrase is crucial: '**according as we hope in thee**'. The Hebrew ka'asher yachalnu lak (according as we hope in you) establishes correlation between hope and mercy's experience. This isn't earning mercy through hope—mercy is undeserved by definition. Rather, hope is the posture that receives mercy. Clenched fists can't receive gifts; open hands can. Similarly, pride resists grace; humble hope receives it. Those who hope in God position themselves to experience His mercy; those trusting self or other sources miss mercy meant for them.

This verse balances divine sovereignty and human responsibility. God's mercy is sovereign gift, yet humans must hope/trust to receive it. Ephesians 2:8-9 declares, 'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.' Grace is God's; faith is ours—yet even faith is enabled by grace (John 6:44, Philippians 1:29). The psalm's

concluding prayer models Christian life: hoping in God's mercy, depending on His faithfulness, trusting His character, and thereby experiencing His loyal love.

## Historical Context

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This concluding verse functioned liturgically as benediction—priest or worship leader praying God's mercy upon assembled congregation. Ancient Israelite worship concluded with priestly blessing (Numbers 6:24-26): 'The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.' Psalm 33's conclusion similarly invokes divine mercy upon worshiping community.

For Israel facing national crises—military threats, economic hardship, spiritual apostasy—this prayer acknowledged their dependence on God's mercy. Human resources were insufficient; only divine faithfulness could deliver. The exile particularly demonstrated this—stripped of land, temple, and national sovereignty, they relied entirely on God's covenant loyalty to preserve and restore them. Prophecies promised restoration based on God's mercy, not Israel's merit (Ezekiel 36:22-32).

The early church inherited this prayer. Paul's epistles typically open with grace-mercy greetings and close with grace benedictions. The church existed by mercy—God's undeserved favor toward sinners. Every gathering acknowledged dependence on divine grace. Liturgical traditions formalized this in benedictions pronouncing God's mercy upon congregation. Even non-liturgical traditions typically conclude worship with prayer invoking God's blessing—secularized version of this ancient pattern.

Contemporary believers need this reminder: we live, move, and have being entirely by God's mercy. Apart from grace, we have no hope. Yet in Christ, mercy abundantly rests upon us—not according to our worthiness but according to our hope in Him. As we trust, we experience; as we hope, we receive; as we depend, we're sustained. The psalm's concluding prayer becomes ongoing Christian posture: Lord, let Your mercy be upon us according as we hope in You.

## Related Passages

## **Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith**

## **John 3:16 — God's love and salvation**

## **Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith**

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

1. What is the relationship between hoping in God (human response) and receiving His mercy (divine gift)—does hope earn mercy?
  2. How does the corporate nature of this prayer ('us,' 'we') emphasize community's dependence on divine mercy?
  3. What does it mean practically to 'hope in God'—what attitudes, actions, and perspectives characterize this hope?
  4. How should awareness that we live entirely by God's mercy affect our attitudes toward ourselves and others?
  5. In what ways does Christ's death and resurrection secure the mercy this verse requests, guaranteeing its reception by those who trust Him?

## Interlinear Text

יְהִי מַסְדָּךְ יְהִי רָאשֵׁךְ יְהִי לְכֶם כִּי אֲשֶׁר עָלָיכֶם יְהִי נְכוֹן H1961 Let thy mercy O LORD H5921 H834 be upon us according as we hope H2617 H3068 H3176

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## Additional Cross-References

**Psalms 119:76** (Grace): Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.

**Psalms 13:5** (Grace): But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.

**Matthew 9:29** (Parallel theme): Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

**Psalms 119:49** (Hope): Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.

**Psalms 32:10** (Grace): Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.

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