

What Lasts Forever?

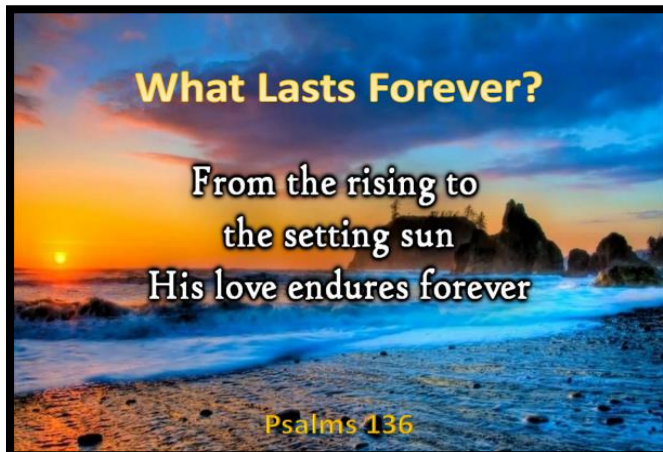
I remember when I was a young boy, I dreamed of owning my first computer. I did my research and found that the Commodore 64 was the best one on the market at that time but was awfully expensive! I tried to convince my mom and dad that the computer would not only make an excellent Christmas gift but would also further my education. Looking back, I now realize the



awkward and slightly humiliating situation I had put my parents in for they had to sit me down and explain that we were a poor family and as such food, shelter and clothing came first! They did not say “NO” but instead stated that I would have to save up and buy the computer myself. I saved every last penny I got from my paper route but after months of saving I soon realized it would be years before I would have enough to make such a grand purchase so I talked my brothers into splitting the costs. How

we loved playing games, programming and occasionally fighting over that computer! Then one day the printer stopped working and it was too much money to get it fixed, so we stopped printing out programs, pictures, and puzzles. Then the tape drive started to “eat” tapes so many programs and games could no longer be loaded and played. I can still remember the gloomy day when that Commodore 64 refused to “boot up” and me and my brothers hard-earned dollars went down the drain!

Now that I am much older and hopefully a little wiser, I am starting to realize the depth of what Jesus meant when He said that the grass is here today and gone tomorrow (Matthew 6:30)! Like my Commodore 64 nothing in this world seems to last! Whom amongst us does not

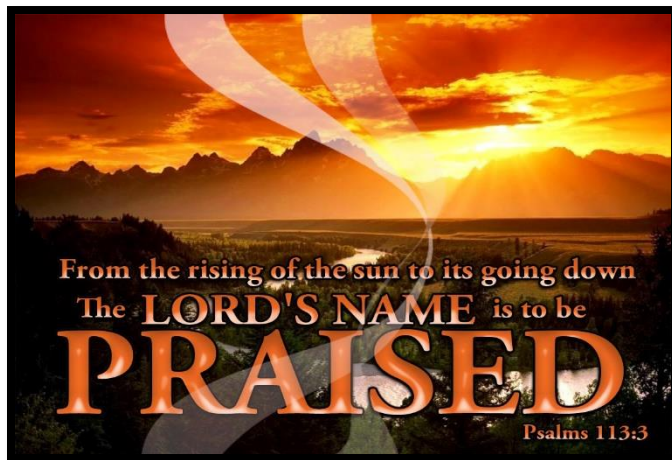


cringe every time a major appliance breaks because we know a new one will cost more money and last half as long as our old one? We work long hours, scrimp, and save only to find our naps, weekends, vacation times, cars and homes have expiry dates that approach quicker than the speed of light! Even in a world where everyone is interconnected with vast populations at the click of a few buttons; one finds that friendships, marriages, and family

connections are in a constant flux of beginning and ending at a moment's notice! And when it comes to our health who amongst us "older" ones cannot look back at a time when we had more hair, strong backs and muscles, quicker minds, and never-ending energy? This kind of thinking often results in many of this world to falsely conclude that nothing lasts forever and therefore life itself has little meaning. "Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we all die," is the bleak slogan of many nonbelievers in this world! The following sermon is going to explore Psalms 136 to encourage us to "give thanks" that while the temporal things of this world will "pass away" ... God's love lasts forever!

Give Thanks for God is our Lord (verses 1-3)

Psalms 136, a popular hymn amongst the Lord's ancient people¹ called the Great Hallel,² was a song of thanksgiving for God's steadfast love that endures forever!³ God is good for His



mighty acts demonstrate His undying hesed⁴ to remain in a covenant relationship with His people despite their sins and rebellion.⁵ God stands against and separate from the powers and temporal nature of this world⁶ because He is omnipotent and eternal. If there are any other beings either in heaven or on earth that people deem worthy to be called a god, God is infinitely more worthy for these imitations of deity merely get their dominion, authority and their existence

from Him!⁷ While living on this earth it might appear like all things are vanity because they only last a short period of time, when one takes into consideration the unseen reality around us then there is much to rejoice about! Our souls for instance are eternal (Ecclesiastes 12:7) and for

¹ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 120-150*, vol. 6 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 204.

² Robert G. Bratcher and William David Reyburn, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Psalms*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 1107.

³ Robert G. Bratcher and William David Reyburn, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Psalms*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 1108.

⁴ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 107-150: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 1181.

⁵ W. Dennis Tucker Jr., "Psalms 107-150," in *Psalms*, ed. Terry Muck, vol. 2, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 882.

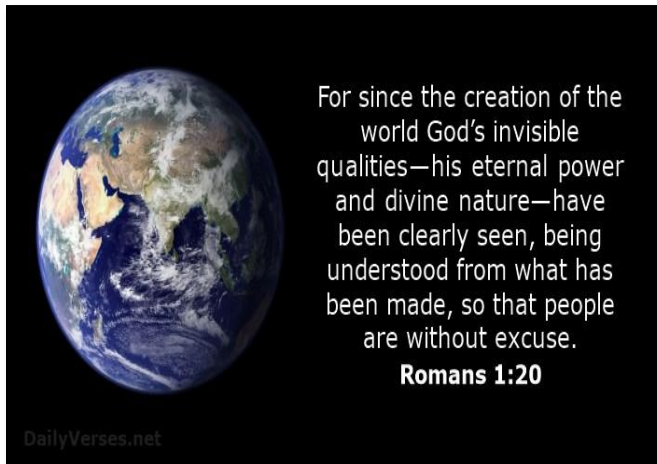
⁶ W. Dennis Tucker Jr., "Psalms 107-150," in *Psalms*, ed. Terry Muck, vol. 2, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 882.

⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 120-150*, vol. 6 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 204.

those who refuse to bow their knees to idols made by hands but instead to the one, only true God, they alone will be adopted by He who is merciful and gracious in His acts of creation and redemption.⁸ Since God's love endures forever, our praise, thanksgiving and submission to Him as our Lord should never be silent (Psalms 113:3)!⁹

Give Thanks God is our Creator (verses 4-9)

Give thanks for God alone is to be praised for the “great wonders”¹⁰ and is our Divine King!¹¹ From the mightiest of mountains to microscopic life,¹² from the heavens to the depths of



the seas, all of creation testifies to the eternal power and majesty of our God (Romans 1:20)! God “held back the chaotic waters” (Psalms 93:3-4),¹³ separated light from darkness (Genesis 1:3), created us in His image (Genesis 1:27) and crowned us a little lower than the angels (Psalms 8:5)! While the false gods of this world are powerless to do anything,¹⁴ day after day all of creation pours forth speech and reveals the truth that God alone is our Creator, sustainer, and redeemer! His handiwork can be

seen in the heavens for the great lights of the sun, moon and stars never stop testifying to His omnipotent power and saving grace.¹⁵ Let us praise God for the new mercies we receive every morning, for the bread we eat, the clothes we wear, the homes we live in, the air we breathe¹⁶

⁸ Willem A. VanGemeren, [“Psalms,”](#) in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 823.

⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Song, a Solace, a Sermon, and a Summons,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 13 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1867), 709.

¹⁰ Willem A. VanGemeren, [“Psalms,”](#) in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 824.

¹¹ W. Dennis Tucker Jr., [“Psalms 107–150,”](#) in *Psalms*, ed. Terry Muck, vol. 2, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 882.

¹² C. H. Spurgeon, [The Treasury of David: Psalms 120-150](#), vol. 6 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 205.

¹³ W. Dennis Tucker Jr., [“Psalms 107–150,”](#) in *Psalms*, ed. Terry Muck, vol. 2, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 888.

¹⁴ W. Dennis Tucker Jr., [“Psalms 107–150,”](#) in *Psalms*, ed. Terry Muck, vol. 2, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 883.

¹⁵ Willem A. VanGemeren, [“Psalms,”](#) in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 824.

¹⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Song, a Solace, a Sermon, and a Summons,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 13 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1867), 710.

and especially for all the times He has healed our bodies, minds and souls! Instead of bowing down and worshipping creation like the heathen do by chasing after the things that are here today and gone tomorrow,¹⁷ let us take delight and responsibly take care of creation, a wonderful signpost of God's mercy and majesty and truly be thankful!¹⁸

Give Thanks for God is our Deliverer (verses 10-15)

Give thanks for God is always near, a Rock and Deliverer to all those who call upon Him in truth (Psalms 18:2, 78:35, 145:18)! Because God always does good to those who love Him (Romans 8:28), our recollection of the past brings us great comfort in times of tribulations!¹⁹ In



response to the cries of Israel did not our "Divine Warrior"²⁰ strike Egypt with plagues, the final of which showered the nation with sorrow and terror that "is hardly possible to exaggerate!"²¹ And was it not God who rescinded the waters of the Red Sea to save His people²² and then once they were on dry ground made them collapse to overthrow the chariots and break the power and pride of Egypt as they drowned in the sea?²³ Whom amongst us dare suggest that God has not done more for us more than we could ever

ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20)? How many times have we cried out to God day and night and in response He has strengthened our souls and placed our feet upon a sure foundation of hope, peace, and security? Not only has He delivered us physically and mentally, He has also sent His

¹⁷ James Montgomery Boice, [Psalms 107–150: An Expository Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 1181.

¹⁸ James Montgomery Boice, [Psalms 107–150: An Expository Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 1181–1182.

¹⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, "[A Song, a Solace, a Sermon, and a Summons,](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 13 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1867), 715.

²⁰ Willem A. VanGemeren, "[Psalms,](#)" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 825.

²¹ C. H. Spurgeon, [The Treasury of David: Psalms 120-150](#), vol. 6 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 207.

²² C. H. Spurgeon, [The Treasury of David: Psalms 120-150](#), vol. 6 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 209.

²³ C. H. Spurgeon, [The Treasury of David: Psalms 120-150](#), vol. 6 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 209.

Son Jesus to pay the price for our “sins of omission and commission”²⁴ that so easily entangled, enslaved and made us “blush scarlet”²⁵ in shame! Through belief in Jesus and confession of our sins we can now boldly approach the Father’s throne as a redeemed,²⁶ masterpiece of His grace!

Give Thanks for God is our Portion (verses 16-24)

Give thanks for no matter how dry the wilderness becomes we will eventually arrive at the promised land.²⁷ Though we as foreigners and strangers of this fallen world face much



persecution for letting our Light shine (Hebrews 11:13; 1 John 2:15-16), we must not forget the merciful experiences we have received proves that we are divinely loved, protected and therefore are to find delight in our Father.²⁸ For example in their low state as slaves did not God send plagues to strike down Egypt and did He not help Israel strike down the mighty kings of Canaan²⁹ in order to pave the way for them to enter the promised land?³⁰ Not only did He demonstrate His covenantal love for His people, but God also demonstrated that

even in the wilderness He remains sovereign!³¹ And even if we are persecuted or have to go through the most heinous of tribulations on this wilderness journey called life³² we will fear no evil for our hope and joy is not found in the journey but in the destination! Even though we

²⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Song, a Solace, a Sermon, and a Summons,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 13 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1867), 715.

²⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Song, a Solace, a Sermon, and a Summons,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 13 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1867), 715.

²⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Song, a Solace, a Sermon, and a Summons,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 13 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1867), 715.

²⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, [The Treasury of David: Psalms 120-150](#), vol. 6 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 209.

²⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Song, a Solace, a Sermon, and a Summons,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 13 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1867), 711.

²⁹ W. Dennis Tucker Jr., [“Psalms 107–150,”](#) in *Psalms*, ed. Terry Muck, vol. 2, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 885.

³⁰ Robert G. Bratcher and William David Reyrburn, [A Translator’s Handbook on the Book of Psalms](#), UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 1111.

³¹ W. Dennis Tucker Jr., [“Psalms 107–150,”](#) in *Psalms*, ed. Terry Muck, vol. 2, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 886.

³² C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Song, a Solace, a Sermon, and a Summons,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 13 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1867), 718.

often see ourselves as “too small and worthless”³³ for God’s mercy we must not forget though He lets us suffer for a while, He will soon receive us eternally into His arms in paradise, for He has and always will be our heart’s desire and portion (Psalms 73:26)!

Give Thanks for God’s Love Endures Forever (verses 25-26)

Give thanks that in his infinite wisdom and love God chose to create a beautiful, temporary place that we can exist and call home! Give thanks that God created us in His image so that we can have a relationship with Him! Give thanks that since God is sovereign over all things seen and unseen, we need not fear anything! Give thanks that while we often think little of ourselves or others, God loved us so much that He sent His son Jesus to pay the price for our sins! Though the winds and waves of tribulations blow we rejoice for the Rock of our salvation has secured our eternal destiny in His very own blood! Give thanks for while the heavens and earth will pass away for those who put their faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ their eternal souls will rest in the bosom of their Creator! Give thanks that while millions of unregenerate people are enemies of God, the moment one of them cries out to God for mercy and believe in His Son they will be saved³⁴ Let me share with you a story from Charles Spurgeon on the mercy of God towards sinners.

“May not the endurance of divine grace be faintly pictured in the following scene? Out yonder, just beyond those grinding rocks, there is a vessel, rolling and tossing on the jagged granite, and



evidently going to pieces. See you not the mariners clinging to the masts? It is not possible that they should escape, except by help from the shore. The rocket apparatus has been used, and a rope is fastened to the vessel, and now a cradle is drawn along the rope. What joy! One man is safely landed, but the rope is weak, and it is doubtful whether it will bear the strain. Two at one time are clinging to the rope, and the ship is nearly broken up—will the rope bear them? The wind howls terribly, and the waves lash furiously—will the rope

hold out? Another is venturing! Ah! see how the rope dips! The waves have gone over him. Will it be able to sustain his weight and save him? Now, we never have such anxiety concerning the

³³ C. H. Spurgeon, [The Treasury of David: Psalms 120-150](#), vol. 6 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 211.

³⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Song, a Solace, a Sermon, and a Summons,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 13 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1867), 713.

salvation of souls by Christ Jesus, “for his mercy endureth for ever.” The salvation of God brings every soul to shore that hangs on it, and, when the world is gone to wreck, free grace will bring all who trust it to the eternal shore. Should the biggest sinner out of hell hang upon that rope of mercy, it will bear him up, and bring him safe to land.³⁵

So, yes while the grass is here today and gone tomorrow that does not mean that nothing lasts forever! Even though my Commodore 64 has long been buried in the sands of time I rejoice for my identity is not found in the things of this strange land I now call home but, in my relationship to my Redeemer who has prepared for me an eternal paradise in His presence! Does anything last forever? Yes, “give thanks to the God of heaven for His love endures forever” (verse 26)!

³⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Song, a Solace, a Sermon, and a Summons.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 13 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1867), 713.