

Lovingkindness

Scripture Reading — Psalm 103:1-12

[He] redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion.

Psalm 103:4 —

Kathleen Norris first rejected the Christianity of her parents and grandparents. When she returned to faith, she realized she had no understanding of its words. For any courageous person who ventures into a church, a worship service can feel like a barrage of unfamiliar terms. Norris writes, “I was so exhausted afterwards I would need a three-hour nap. And I would wake depressed, convinced the world called ‘Christian’ was closed to me.”

But some words are worth knowing. And today we unlock the meaning of the grandest word of the psalms. It’s a key word for answering the questions “Who is God?” and “How does God relate to me?” The word in Hebrew is *hesed*. English translations of this word are usually “love,” “lovingkindness,” or “steadfast love.” The word has overtones of tender mercy and compassion. It’s associated with God’s faithfulness and dependability. Through the generations, God’s people experience God’s lovingkindness as the tender, faithful, stubborn love on which every breath depends.

As Psalm 103 says, God’s *hesed* removes our sins. We pretend we are better than we are. We easily find fault with others but ignore our own sins. We can be warped, weak, deluded people. This is not a cause for worry or groveling, but for celebrating God’s lovingkindness.

Prayer

Jesus, your steadfast love is indeed amazing. You are the friend of sinners—my friend and Savior. You have paid for my sins and washed them all away. Thank you. Amen

Devotion topics: [Bible](#), [Books of the Bible](#), [Psalms](#)

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Printed on August 14, 2020

