**Psalm 118:1-9 Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for *He is* good! For His mercy *endures* forever.**

**2Let Israel now say, “His mercy *endures* forever.” 3Let the house of Aaron now say, “His mercy endures forever.” 4Let those who fear the Lord now say, “His mercy *ensures* forever.” 5I called on the Lord in distress; The Lord answered me *and* *set me* in a broad place. 6The Lord *is* on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me? 7The Lord is for me among those who help me; Therefore I shall see *my desire* on those who hate me. 8*It is* better to trust in the Lord Than to put confidence in man. 9*It is* better to trust in the Lord Than to put confidence in princes.**

 We’re now 32 days away from Thanksgiving. I’ve seen some that are giving a thankfulness statement every morning. I hope everyone is waking with thankfulness and praise on their lips, a prayer in their heart, and God on their mind. Being thankful to God is about being thankful for the everlasting things. Challenges will come. Sometimes life is unpleasant. If we expect someone to never have an unpleasant day, then we want a robot for a friend. Jesus didn’t come to save robots… so it shouldn’t surprise us when we find emotion and pain in our brothers and sisters.

 We’re in Psalm 118 this morning. Verse 1 says *Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever*. Give thanks to the Lord – because He is good, He is kind, He is merciful. The word for mercy means kindness. He won’t condone our sin, but He will welcome our cry for pardon. The idea of thanks here is a reverent praise. This verse should look very familiar to us – last week we studied 1 Chronicles 16:34 which said - *Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.* David wrote both. He is consistent.

 Verse 2 – 4 *2Let Israel now say, “His mercy endures forever.” 3Let the house of Aaron now say, “His mercy endures forever.” 4Let those who fear the Lord now say, “His mercy endures forever.”* His mercy, His goodness, His kindness, His long-suffering, His generosity, His gentleness, His Love endures forever. David is calling on the house of Jacob, the rulers of Israel to repeat it, the priests to repeat it, and the people of faith to repeat it. He’s gets all levels. The term endures forever is interesting – it literally means to endure all the way to the vanishing point, that it endures so long that we can’t make out the limits. That’s important because it means His mercy has no limits, but we must accept it through Christ. Jesus is the door to that mercy and grace. Jesus is literally our gateway to God, but we have to step through.

 Verse5 *I called on the Lord in distress; The Lord answered me and set me in a broad place.* I cried out to the Lord – Jah – the vehement One in distress. The word for distress means a tight spot, a troublesome place, a painful place. The Lord answered – He paid attention – took note of the situation and *set me in a broad place* meaning a place of freedom. When we call to the Lord, He sees our pain and sets us in a place of unlimited freedom through His Son. Talk about mercy that endures forever!

 Verse 6 & 7 *The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?* ***7*** *The Lord is for me among those who help me; Therefore I shall see my desire on those who hate me.*God is for us. Romans 8:31 says *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?* The answer is straightforward. We’ve nothing to fear when we are walking in God’s will and doing His purpose. Does this mean we’ll never be thrown in prison for our Faith? Let’s ask Paul, in chains. Does this mean we’ll never be exiled from society for our Faith? Let’s ask John, exiled to Patmos. Does this mean we will never die for our belief in God? Let’s ask His Son, Jesus, as He is being crucified. Our confidence is in the hereafter, not the here and now.

 Verse 8 *It is better to trust in the Lord Than to put confidence in man.* I found it interesting that exactly 594 chapters in the Bible come before Psalm 118 and exactly 594 chapters come after Psalm 118. Though not everyone agrees, according to some Theologians far smarter than I ever can hope to be, the center verse of the Bible falls in Psalm 118. Verse 8… what does the center verse of the Bible say - *It is better to trust in the Lord Than to put confidence in man.* It is better, meaning wisest, to trust – literally flee for protection to – the Lord than to put confidence in man – literally mankind, the things created by man.

 Verse 9 *It is better to trust in the Lord Than to put confidence in princes.* It’s wiser to flee to the Lord than to place confidence in the noble, the wealthy. Psalm 146:3 makes it even more plain - *Do not put your trust in princes, Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.* God is our only refuge and the gateway to God is through Jesus His Son.

 As we leave here today, let’s make these next 32 days a season of Thanksgiving, not based in the world, but based in the eternal. If you haven’t given you life to Jesus, come today and step through that gateway to God. There’s no other way to get there. There’s only one source of Living Water. To stand around thirsty makes no sense, when, with only a word, you can have all you want to drink and will never thirst again.