

Day 2, Aug 28

Loving Kindness

"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8 (ESV)

Loving kindness is how some English translations of the Bible translate the Hebrew word *cheved* (also spelled *hesed*). In other verses and other versions of the Bible, the word is translated as mercy, goodness, kindness, faithful love, and steadfast love. As with many Hebrew words, there is no exact English equivalent that conveys the fullness of the meaning of *cheved*. However, by looking at its usage in the Bible, we can gain a better understanding of this word's richness.

Most often, *cheved* is used in relation to God and His character. When God passed before Moses, He declared Himself to be "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." "Steadfast love" in these verses is *cheved* in Hebrew. Moses repeated this promise back to God when begging Him to forgive the Israelites in Numbers 14:18-19. Moses again pointed to this lovingkindness, or steadfast love, of God when giving the law to the people a second time before they entered the Promised Land.

Cheved is a committed love that shows mercy, forgiveness, redemption, favor, and grace toward the one to whom it has been promised. We can call upon God's steadfast love when we need forgiveness (Psalm 25:7), when we need to be delivered from troubles (Psalm 119:149) and when we need assurance of His promises (Psalm 23:6). Certainly, we can follow the Psalmist's plea in Psalm 136:1 to "Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever." God's unending lovingkindness is ample cause for thanksgiving and praise.

Please make this wonderful hymn your prayer today.

*In loving kindness Jesus came,
My soul in mercy to reclaim;
And from the depths of sin and shame
Through grace he lifted me.
From sinking sand He lifted me,
With tender hand He lifted me,
From shades of night to plains of light,
O praise His name, He lifted me!*