

Proverbs Week #22 (3:3)

Proverbs 3:3 “Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.”

It is traditional to recite verses from Psalm 36 in the first part of morning prayers. After one inspects the fringes on the tallit and blesses God the head is covered and the following verses are recited:

“How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings. They drink their fill of the abundance of Your house; And You give them to drink of the river of Your delights. For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light. Continue Your lovingkindness to those who know You, and Your righteousness to the upright in heart.” Psalm 36:8-11

The focus of today’s lesson is the Hebrew word ‘chesed’ which is often translated kindness, lovingkindness, loyalty, or goodness. David sang the words from this song and proclaimed that God’s lovingkindness (chesed) was precious! His song not only proclaimed this truth but also cried out to God that he would continue to show His lovingkindness (chesed) to those who know Him. Of the over 256 times this word is used in the Tanach almost half are in the Psalms. This word is found in the oft repeated phrase “Give thanks to the Lord for He is good and His mercy (chesed) endures forever.” (Psa 106:1 and elsewhere) The chesed of Adonai is of great value and something worth singing about!

In Psalm 64 David proclaims that God’s lovingkindness is better than life. Because of this he declares that he would sing God’s praises and bless Him as long as he lived. I want to suggest that this attitude of thankfulness and praise to God is a central part of ‘not letting ‘chesed’ leave you.’ To those who know God (those who are known in covenant relationship with God) they understand that His lovingkindness is the source and sustaining power of the relationship they have with Him. Because God loved us He sought us and paid the highest price to redeem us and draw us close to Himself. This love should never leave us. We should find ways to bind it around our necks and write it on our hearts. We do not do this just on our own. This is the work of the Spirit of God in us.

If our spiritual walking with God were to be compared with running a race would you think the race would be a sprint or a marathon? If it were a short race maybe we would not have a need to understand just how long God’s lovingkindness lasts. The long run we have ahead of us (if the Lord is willing) needs to be run with full awareness that God’s love will last to the very end. It is this truth that we must cling to and not allow anything to cause us to doubt.

The scriptures teach us, “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.” (Isa 40:8) As the summer heat has turned many lawns brown, I am reminded that even when the things of this world look like they are dead or faded God’s truth still endures. We as a family at Beit Hallel must be reminded that God has a purpose for each and every one of us. He desires for us to be like His Son and to hold on to what is true. Whether times appear to be good or bad God will remain faithful to His words. We can trust in Him-- He will be faithful.

As I end today’s lesson I want to plant an idea in your minds. I would like to expand this teaching time and need your input and ideas. This first page has (at least in theory) always been focused on teaching the children. I would like to possibly add a second page that might be called a Parents Page that could be used throughout the week to focus on the themes of these lessons. What do you think? Please talk to me later today if you think this could be beneficial.