Introduction

The Hebrew word “hesed”—translated in the NASB as “lovingkindness”—is an Old Testament concept that is often equated to “grace” in the New Testament. However, that falls short of its actual meaning. “The New Bible Dictionary” (Inter-varsity Press) succinctly provides that “the passages where it is found reveals its close connection with the two ideas of covenant and faithfulness. Its meaning may be summed up as ‘steadfast love on the basis of a covenant.’ It is employed both of God’s attitude towards his people and of theirs to him...” David elaborates on this more fully in this Psalm, providing the benefits and activities of God’s grace—“lovingkindness”—based on our attitude towards Him, and how it’s a complete work of God through and to Him.

Read verses 1-5

Q: What are God’s “benefits”?

- Pardon
- Healing
- Redemption
- Crowning
- Satisfaction
- Renewal

Q: How would you describe the scope of His benefits? Are they mainly earthly or temporary? On what do they seem to be fixed?

A: They’re the sum of the work of salvation for this life and the life to come. They’re the work of God for all eternity that begins in this life and completed in the next.

Application: God’s “benefits” are the sum of the work of salvation for this life and the one to come.

- If you were to list all of the great things you have, are, and will receive from God, how many of these would’ve been on your list prior to reading this Psalm?
- Is there something you think is missing from, or you wish was on, this list? What might that say about your spiritual walk?
Read verses 6-14

Q: List the attributes of God's grace provided in v.6-10.

- “...performs righteous deeds...” (v.6)
- “...made known His ways...” (v.7)
- “...compassionate and gracious...” (v.8)
- “...slow to anger...” (v.8)
- “...He will not always strive with us...” (v.9)
- “...has not dealt with us according to our sins...” (v.10)
- “...has not...rewarded us according to our iniquities.” (v.10)

Q: How might we interpret these things together to mean that they are the working of His righteousness in our life?

A: All of these things have to do with building spiritual character and walking according to His ways, not ours. The emphasis is completely on our soul, not our body; on our spiritual walk, not our fleshly existence.

Q: What are the 3 examples/images used in v.11-13 and what do they teach?

- (v.11) For those who “fear Him”—that is, respect and approach Him with an obedient heart, soul and mind for Who He is—His grace is without measure: “...as high as the heavens are above the earth...”
- (v.12) For those who “fear Him”—that is, respect and approach Him with an obedient heart, soul and mind for Who He is—His work of salvation is without measure to have removed our transgressions “as far as the east is from the west”.
- (v.13) For those who “fear Him”—that is, respect and approach Him with an obedient heart, soul and mind for Who He is—His grace is the evidence of the Father’s regard and love for us as His very own children: “...as a father has compassion on his children...”

Q: How does v.14 summarize why God requires so little from us for grace without measure?

A: He is acutely aware that He is God and we are not. Therefore His nature is to magnify beyond measure His love towards those who make the minimal effort that a human being is capable of. He does not require anything that is extraordinary or beyond our ability.

Application: God’s nature is to magnify beyond measure His love toward those who make the minimal effort that a human being is capable of. He does not require anything that is extraordinary or beyond our ability.
15 As for man, his days are like grass;  
As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.  
16 When the wind has passed over it, it is no more,  
And its place acknowledges it no longer.  
17 But the lovingkindness of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him,  
And His righteousness to children’s children,  
18 To those who keep His covenant  
And remember His precepts to do them.

Read verses 15-18

Q: What is the contrast between man and God stated here?
A: Man’s existence is so fleeting and fragile that it can be completely erased and forgotten; God’s grace is the only thing that can truly cause him to be remembered and sustained.

Q: What is the critical condition stated here? Who will experience His grace?
- “...those who keep His covenant...”
- “...those who...remember His precepts...”
- “...those who...do them.”

It’s being faithful in the relationship we’ve entered into with Him and following through with obedience to the responsibilities He’s assigned as a result of same.

Application: Our part follows by putting into practice His Word.

Read verses 19-22

Q: What is the response of His angels to the knowledge and experience of God’s sovereignty?
A: “...who perform His word, obeying the voice of His word!” (v.20) They are obedient.

Q: What is the response of His heavenly hosts to the knowledge and experience of God’s sovereignty?
A: “...serve Him, doing His will.” (v.21) They are obedient.

Q: What, therefore, is the example throughout all levels of God’s entire creation of the correct response to Him, whether in heaven or on earth?
A: Obedience.

Q: In the context of this Psalm, in what does obedience result?
A: God’s grace—lovingkindness—without measure.

Application: Obedience is the right response to God’s grace.

Overall Application
- Notice that nothing but God’s blessings can come from obedience. Do we see obedience as a chore or the natural extension of our relationship with the Father?
- Do we sometimes think of “grace” as God giving us something in spite of our disobedience? Is that the teaching in this Psalm?
- If His grace provides for our eternal needs beyond measure and beyond just the boundaries of this present life, how should we live THIS life?