Good morning, Family. How’s your worship? Remember, it’s not about us. Family, worship is a privilege. In worship, we recognize God’s greatness, His worth. That’s where our word “worship” comes from: “worth-ship.” And when we worship in the Spirit and in truth, regardless of circumstances or our passing feelings, our perspective changes from earthly to Heavenly. We draw closer to the heart of God. Our worship is testimony! There are 168 hours in each week. And all of them should be reserved for bringing honor and glory to God. David sings in Psalm 34:1, “I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be upon my lips.” Worship is the proper response to God. “Yeah,” you say, “But Pastor Chris haven’t you seen what’s going on in our world?” Yep, I have, but God remains the same. Let me share with you an indisputable truth: \*The God of the universe loves you! He always has. He always will. He loved you before you were born, and He has not and will not change His mind. Today’s scripture in Romans speaks to that love: nothing “will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” This love, Church, is an unfailing love. It’s unfailing because Christ is unfailing. And the embrace and the truth of this love is the fuel for worship.

Worship is our reciprocating the love He has given us. The Hebrew word for this unfailing love is “*Hesed*.” It is found 250 times in scripture and is, in the Old Testament, the prominent way that God describes His love for us. It is a deliberate choice of affection or kindness. It is merciful. It is consistent. It is the love that is found in Christ Jesus. “*Hesed*” encompasses God’s faithfulness, His resolve, His covenant—His choice to make you and me the focus of His love (\*Romans 5:6-8). Theologian John Oswalt said, “*Hesed*” is a completely undeserved kindness and generosity. The prophet Isaiah records:

10 “Though the mountains be shaken

and the hills be removed,

yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken

nor my covenant of peace be removed,”

says the Lord, who has compassion on you. (Isaiah 54:10)

It is faithful and reliable. It is loyal. It is a love that demands a response. How blessed we are that we are the focus, but do we respond to God’s *Hesed* with *Hesed* for Him? Dave Adamson has said, “*Hesed*, practically, is a wife praying for the salvation of a husband.”

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\*Romans 5:6-8

6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Clearly, *Hesed* is love based in action, love expressed in worship. It is a love of loyalty, calling us to a new level of commitment in a lifestyle of worship (\*Ephesians 3:14-19).

In another life, I worked as a licensed pesticide inspector for a well-known company. One of my assignments took me to a hundred-year-old cabin. Crawling under its raised foundation, I immediately discovered that the stability of the entire structure depended upon a vast number of termites that happen to hold hands. When I reported the dire circumstances to the owners, they immediately replied that they had planned to sell the old place and would give a new coat of paint. Family, *Hesed*, the lifestyle of worship to which we are called, is not simply a new coat of paint on an old building. It is salvation transforming us in His love and in the power of His son Jesus’ resurrection. *Hesed* teaches us the character and attributes of our God. You and I know this: NO ONE in scripture encountered Christ Jesus and stayed the same.

*Hesed* is loyal. It’s a father waiting on the front porch for his prodigal child to return—His patience being a fundamental characteristic of our loving God. This love, *Hesed*, is not about the thrill of romantic love but the expression of security in faithfulness. David writes, “Because your love is better than life, my lips will praise you” (Psalm 63:3). The loving God about whom David writes offers a faithful, secure love. Our omnipotent and omnipresent God reminds us that in the face of every circumstance we are the object of His love. This God of unfailing love chose a cross to redeem us, the object of His love. Through His and our Father God, Jesus was so committed to each of us that He created the tree that He would die on—raised it up from a seed to become the agent of His death and our redemption. That’s the fullness of His commitment to you and me: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever should believe in Him would have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Forgiving sin, removing shame, giving grace, and bestowing mercy, God’s love never stops. David Jeremiah reminds us that God did not stop loving Adam & Eve, Noah, Moses, Abraham, Jonah, or Peter. Yes, each sinner suffered some consequences for the sin, but the love of God followed each of them through their sanctification into a new, better life in Him—because He loved them. His love never quits. He loved you before you were born, and He loves you today. He loved the men who drove the nails into

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Ephesians 3:14-19

14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom every family[a] in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

His hands and feet. Listen, Family, His love—unfailing, all-encompassing—should produce in us an undivided heart, a new level of commitment that emerges naturally as a lifestyle of worship. His love should motivate our repentance. In it, we are saved and transformed. We are restored; we are called to place our hope in Him, the only one who truly can give hope. Daily and deliberately, we should find ourselves choosing Jesus, living live we love Him (\*1 Peter 1:3-4). He has never and will never quit loving you and me. We must recognize His unfailing commitment to each of us; we must find satisfaction only in Him, expressed in a lifestyle of worship.

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\*1 Peter 1:3-4

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you,

PASSAGES IN SUPPORT OF THIS SERMON:

Romans 8:38-39

38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,[a] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Psalm 36

1 I have a message from God in my heart

concerning the sinfulness of the wicked:[b]

There is no fear of God

before their eyes.

2 In their own eyes they flatter themselves

too much to detect or hate their sin.

3 The words of their mouths are wicked and deceitful;

they fail to act wisely or do good.

4 Even on their beds they plot evil;

they commit themselves to a sinful course

and do not reject what is wrong.

5 Your love, Lord, reaches to the heavens,

your faithfulness to the skies.

6 Your righteousness is like the highest mountains,

your justice like the great deep.

You, Lord, preserve both people and animals.

7 How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!

People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

8 They feast on the abundance of your house;

you give them drink from your river of delights.

9 For with you is the fountain of life;

in your light we see light.

10 Continue your love to those who know you,

your righteousness to the upright in heart.

11 May the foot of the proud not come against me,

nor the hand of the wicked drive me away.

12 See how the evildoers lie fallen—

thrown down, not able to rise!