



St Barnabas Cray

Trusting God's Enduring Love

Weekly Devotional Journey

Monday - A Love That Never Wavers

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of gods. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the Lord of lords: His love endures forever. (Psalm 136:1-3 NIV)

Devotional Thought

There is something profoundly intentional about the structure of Psalm 136. Twenty-six verses. Twenty-six refrains. Twenty-six times the same declaration rings out: His love endures forever. This is not poetic repetition for its own sake. This is a theological drumbeat, a rhythmic insistence that no matter what story is being told — creation, exodus, wilderness, conquest — the constant, unchanging reality beneath it all is the enduring love of God.

The Hebrew word behind 'love' here is *hesed* — one of the richest words in the entire Old

Testament. It carries within it the ideas of loyal love, steadfast kindness, covenant faithfulness, and merciful commitment. It is not a feeling that rises and falls with circumstance. It is a settled, purposeful, unbreakable devotion. God's love is not dependent on our performance, our faithfulness, or our feelings. It is rooted entirely in who He is.

We live in a world where love is conditional. We experience love that grows cold, love that walks away, love that disappoints. And so when we come to the Scriptures and read of a love that endures forever, something in us wants to believe it but struggles to fully receive it. We project our human experience of love onto God, and in doing so we diminish the very thing that could transform us.

But the psalmist will not let us do that. Again and again the refrain returns. His love endures forever. In the morning when you wake with anxiety about the day ahead — His love endures forever. In the afternoon when you feel unseen and forgotten — His love endures forever. In the evening when you review the day and find yourself wanting — His love endures forever.

This is not wishful thinking. This is the bedrock of Christian faith. Begin this week by simply receiving this truth afresh. Let it settle into the deeper places of your heart. You are loved — not conditionally, not partially, not temporarily — but fully, faithfully, and forever.

Reflection Question

When you think about God's love for you personally, do you find it easy to receive or do you hold back? What experiences or beliefs might be making it difficult to fully trust in His enduring love?

From Sunday's Sermon

"One of the constants that you can hold on to in life is the enduring love of God. One of the things that you can be confident of is the enduring love of God. I can assure you that if every other thing fails, the love of God for you and for me never fails."

Today's Application

Begin this week by making Psalm 136 personal. Take a few minutes this morning to write your own short version of the psalm — not twenty-six verses, but perhaps five or six. In each verse, name something God has done in your own life or story, and after each one, write the refrain: His love endures forever. This is not a creative exercise; it is a formational one. When we name what God has done and anchor it to His enduring love, we begin to rewire the way we see our lives. Keep this piece of writing somewhere visible this week — on your desk, your kitchen counter, your phone screen. Each time you see it, let it be a prompt to pause and receive God's love afresh. If you find the exercise difficult because you struggle to name God's goodness, that itself is worth bringing honestly to Him in prayer today.

Morning Prayer

Heavenly Father, I come to You at the start of this week with all that I carry — the worries, the weariness, the questions, and the hopes. Before I do anything else, I want simply to receive what Your Word declares: that Your love for me endures forever. I confess that I do not always live as though this is true. I allow circumstances to make me doubt Your care. I allow my failures to make me feel unworthy of Your love. But Your Word says Your hesed is not based on my worthiness. It is rooted in Your character. Help me this week to rest in that truth. Let it be the ground beneath my feet as I go into each day. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Evening Devotion

Returning to the Refrain

Evening Reflection

As this day draws to a close, take a moment to let the morning's theme settle more deeply. Twenty-six times the psalmist declared it — His love endures forever — and yet a single day is often enough to make us forget. Perhaps today was full and demanding, and the thought of God's enduring love felt distant in the busyness. Perhaps something happened that made you question whether He was truly present. That is precisely why the psalmist repeats the refrain so insistently. We are forgetful people. We need to hear it again and again.

The beautiful thing about hesed — that loyal, covenant love of God — is that it was not less true at two o'clock this afternoon than it was when you read about it this morning. God's love did not

fluctuate with the events of your day. It held steady through every moment, seen and unseen. The question is not whether His love was present today; the question is whether you were aware of it.

As you prepare for rest, let the refrain return: His love endures forever. Let it be the last thing your heart hears before sleep.

Evening Reflection

Looking back over today, where can you now see — even in small or quiet ways — evidence of God's enduring love at work in your life?

Evening Prayer

Lord, as I rest tonight, I thank You that Your love did not depend on how well today went. You were faithful even when I was distracted. Your love endured even in the ordinary moments I barely noticed. Receive my gratitude, and let me sleep in the peace of being held by a love that never fails. Amen.

Tuesday - Nothing Can Separate Us

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow — not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below, indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39 NLT)

Devotional Thought

The Apostle Paul does not arrive at Romans 8 lightly. He has journeyed through the depths of human sinfulness in chapters one through three, the wonder of justification by faith in chapters four and five, the struggle with indwelling sin in chapter seven, and the glorious life of the Spirit in chapter eight. And then, as if standing on a mountaintop after a long and arduous climb, he makes one of the most sweeping declarations in all of Scripture: nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Notice the comprehensiveness of Paul's list. He covers the spectrum of human fear — death and life, present and future, spiritual forces and earthly powers, heights and depths. It is as though he is anticipating every objection, every scenario, every dark night of the soul in which a believer might whisper, 'Perhaps this is the thing that finally puts me beyond God's reach.' And to every one of those fears, Paul responds with the same unshakeable conviction: nothing.

One of the fears Paul names is particularly striking: 'our fears for today and our worries about tomorrow.' He does not dismiss these fears as trivial. He names them as real. But he places them firmly within the category of things that cannot separate us from God's love. Your anxiety about what lies ahead does not diminish God's love for you. Your dread of what today might bring does not cause God to withdraw. He is not a fair-weather companion who stays close only when life is manageable.

This passage also points us to where this love is ultimately revealed — in Christ Jesus our Lord. Paul does not point us to a principle or a feeling. He points us to a person. The love of God is not an abstract theological concept; it is embodied, enacted, and made tangible in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. To know Jesus is to know this love. To follow Jesus is to walk deeper into it. Whatever you are facing today — whatever fears are present, whatever pressures are mounting — you are not facing them outside of God's love. You are held within it.

Reflection Question

What is the fear or worry that most tempts you to feel separated from God's love? How does Paul's declaration in Romans 8 speak directly into that fear?

From Sunday's Sermon

"Can anything separate us from God's love? In that disaster, in that thing that has brought you so much sorrow and so much suffering, can it separate us from God's love?"

Today's Application

Today's application is both inward and outward. Inwardly: identify the specific fear or anxiety that most readily makes you feel distant from God. Write it down. Then, beside it, write out Romans 8:38-39 in full. This is not a magical formula, but it is a deliberate act of bringing the truth of Scripture into direct contact with the lie that your circumstances are stronger than God's love. Pray over what you have written. Outwardly: consider someone in your life who is currently in a season of suffering, loss, or fear. Not someone you need to fix or advise, but someone who needs to be reminded that they are not forgotten. Send them a message today — a simple word of encouragement, a prayer, a reminder that they are loved. In doing so, you become a small but real expression of the enduring love of God to another person.

Morning Prayer

Father, I confess that I allow my fears to speak louder than Your promises. I confess that when life becomes hard, I am tempted to believe that Your love has somehow grown distant. Forgive me for the smallness of my trust. Today I choose to stand on the declaration of Your Word: nothing can separate me from Your love. Not my failures, not my fears, not the uncertainties of this day. You are with me, and Your love holds me. Help me to live from that truth rather than merely acknowledging it. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Evening Devotion**Held Through the Day****Evening Reflection**

Paul's words from this morning bear returning to tonight. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. As you review this day, you may be able to point to moments where that felt gloriously true — a kindness received, a prayer answered, a sense of peace that surprised you. But you may also be able to point to moments where the fears Paul named felt very real and very loud.

Here is the pastoral truth worth sitting with tonight: the fact that you felt afraid today does not mean you were outside of God's love. Fear and faith are not opposites. The disciples were afraid in the storm, and Jesus was in the boat with them. Your anxiety does not push God away. He draws near to the broken-hearted. He is acquainted with grief. He is not startled by your fears.

You were held today — even in the moments you did not feel it. That is what it means for love to endure. It holds even when we cannot feel its grip. Rest in that tonight.

Evening Reflection

Was there a moment today when you felt afraid or alone? Can you, in hindsight, see any evidence that God was present with you in that moment, even if you did not recognise it at the time?

Evening Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You that You are not absent from my fears. Thank You that nothing today — not a single moment — placed me outside of Your love. I release my worries about tomorrow into Your hands. Hold me through the night as You held me through the day. Amen.

Wednesday - Love Personified: The Gift of Jesus**Morning Devotion****Today's Verse**

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
(Romans 5:8 NIV)

Devotional Thought

We have spent two days meditating on the enduring love of God as declared in Psalm 136 and affirmed by Paul in Romans 8. But today we come to the very heart of the matter — the place where that love is not merely described but demonstrated. Romans 5:8 is one of the most staggering sentences in all of Scripture. God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

The word 'demonstrates' is important. It is an active word. God did not simply feel love for us, nor did He merely declare it from a distance. He demonstrated it. He showed it. He enacted it. And the manner of that demonstration is almost too extraordinary to take in: whilst we were actively in rebellion, whilst we were walking away from Him, whilst we were choosing everything but Him —

He sent His Son to die for us.

This upends every human understanding of love. Human love, at its best, is responsive. We love those who love us back, those who are kind to us, those who are worthy of our affection. But God's love is entirely different in its nature. It is not responsive; it is initiating. It does not wait for us to clean ourselves up before extending itself. It reaches into the mess, into the sin, into the rebellion — and it gives.

This is why the gospel is genuinely good news. It is not good advice about how to become loveable. It is the announcement that you are already loved — not in spite of your sin, but in full knowledge of it. God looked at you — the real you, not the Sunday morning version — and sent His Son anyway.

And this is why, as we heard so powerfully, Jesus is the love of God personified. He is not merely a messenger of God's love. He is the embodiment of it. To encounter Jesus is to encounter the fullness of God's love made flesh. When Jesus touched the leper, that was God's love touching the untouchable. When Jesus wept at Lazarus' tomb, that was God's love entering into grief. When Jesus hung on the cross, that was God's love absorbing the full weight of human sin so that nothing — absolutely nothing — would ever be able to separate us from Him.

Reflection Question

How does it change your understanding of God's love to know that it was demonstrated whilst you were still a sinner? Does this truth make it easier or harder to receive His love, and why?

From Sunday's Sermon

"Jesus is the love of God personified to you and I. Jesus is the relationship. Jesus is the fellowship. Jesus is the entirety. Jesus is the promise right from the beginning. Jesus is the man who replaces what was lost. Jesus is the one who salvages everything for you and I."

Today's Application

Today's application is centred on deepening your personal relationship with Jesus as the embodiment of God's love. Set aside fifteen minutes today — perhaps during a lunch break or in a quiet moment at home — to read slowly through one of the Gospel accounts of Jesus interacting with someone who felt unworthy or outcast. Consider John 4 (the woman at the well), Luke 19:1-10 (Zacchaeus), or John 8:1-11 (the woman caught in adultery). As you read, do not read it as a historical account. Read it as a window into the character of the God who loves you. Ask yourself: how does Jesus treat this person? What does that tell me about how He sees me? Then spend a few minutes in honest prayer, bringing the parts of yourself that you feel are most unloveable — the failures, the secret struggles, the shame — and placing them before the Jesus you have just encountered in the text.

Morning Prayer

Lord Jesus, I am undone by the truth that You died for me whilst I was still a sinner. There was nothing attractive or deserving in me that earned Your love. You gave it freely, fully, and at the greatest possible cost. Help me today not to take that lightly. Help me not to reduce the cross to a theological fact I acknowledge but never truly feel. Let the love that was demonstrated on Calvary penetrate the deepest places of my heart today. And where I still struggle to believe I am truly loved, draw near to me. In Your name I pray, Amen.

Evening Devotion

The Face of Love

Evening Reflection

As Wednesday draws to a close, let us linger a little longer with the image of Jesus as the love of God made visible. Throughout the Gospels, people who encountered Jesus were changed — not primarily by His teaching, though His teaching was extraordinary, but by the experience of being truly seen and truly loved by Him. The woman at the well. The tax collector up a tree. The leper who dared to ask for healing. Each of them experienced in Jesus something they had not found anywhere else: a love that knew them completely and accepted them fully.

This is the love that is available to you tonight. Not a distant, theological love that exists in the pages of a book, but a present, personal love that sees you exactly as you are right now — tired,

perhaps, or discouraged, perhaps carrying things you have not told anyone else — and says, I know. I am here. You are mine.

Wednesday can feel like the middle of the week in more ways than one — the midpoint between the energy of Monday's fresh start and the relief of Friday's end. But you are not in the middle of God's love. You are at the centre of it. Right now. Tonight.

Evening Reflection

If Jesus were sitting with you right now, looking at you with the same compassion He showed to those He met in the Gospels, what do you think He would want to say to you?

Evening Prayer

Jesus, thank You that You are not a distant God. You are Emmanuel — God with us. Sit with me tonight. Let me rest in the knowledge that I am fully known and fully loved. Where I have carried shame today, replace it with grace. Where I have felt invisible, remind me that my name is written on the palm of Your hand. Amen.

Thursday - Loved Intimately, Known Completely

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me. (Isaiah 49:15-16 NIV)

Devotional Thought

There is a kind of love that is general — broad, benevolent, and somewhat impersonal. And then there is the kind of love that knows your name, notices your tears, and counts the hairs on your head. The love of God, as the Scriptures reveal it, is emphatically the latter. It is not the love of a distant deity who cares for humanity in aggregate. It is the love of a Father who knows you specifically, intimately, and completely.

The image in Isaiah 49 is breathtaking. God says He has engraved our names on the palms of His hands. Think about what that means. The palm of the hand is not a place you can ignore. It is in constant view. It is involved in everything you do. When God reaches out to act in the world, He sees your name. When He folds His hands in the quiet of eternity, He sees your name. You are not an afterthought. You are inscribed.

This connects beautifully to what we heard in the sermon about Psalm 56:8 — the remarkable truth that God records our tears. Not just the dramatic ones, the ones shed at funerals or in moments of crisis. But every tear. Tears of frustration, tears of loneliness, tears of joy, tears that fell in the middle of the night when no one else knew. He has a record of them all. He does not merely observe our suffering from a distance; He enters into it. He empathises. He is moved.

This level of intimacy can be difficult to accept, particularly for those who have experienced relationships where being truly known led to being rejected or abandoned. We have learned, through painful experience, that vulnerability is risky. But with God, the calculus is entirely different.

He knows everything about you — the parts you are proud of and the parts you are ashamed of — and His response is not rejection. His response is the cross. His response is hesed. His response is, I will not forget you.

Let that truth do its work in you today. You are not a face in a crowd to God. You are known by name, held in mind, and loved with a specificity that is almost too wonderful to comprehend.

Reflection Question

Is there a part of yourself — a struggle, a failure, a fear — that you have kept hidden from God because you worry that being fully known might mean being less loved? What would it mean to bring that part of yourself openly before Him today?

From Sunday's Sermon

"The tears you and I shed, the Bible says He records it. This kind of love, you cannot find it anywhere else. When you shed tears of joy or tears of sorrow, Scripture says God has a record of it. He empathises with you. He is there with you every time you cry."

Today's Application

Today's application is an exercise in honest intimacy with God. Find a quiet place and a few minutes of genuine stillness. Begin by acknowledging that God already knows everything about you — there is nothing you can reveal that will surprise Him or diminish His love. Then, as an act of trust, bring before Him the thing you most often hide: the recurring sin you feel too ashamed to confess again, the doubt you fear makes you a bad Christian, the grief you have been carrying alone, the anger you have not known what to do with. Speak it aloud or write it down. Then read Isaiah 49:16 again slowly: 'I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.' This is not a moment for self-condemnation. It is a moment to practise being fully known and choosing to believe you are still fully loved. If this surfaces deep pain, consider sharing it with a trusted friend, pastor, or counsellor — being known in community is also part of how God loves us.

Morning Prayer

Father, it is both wonderful and humbling to know that You see me completely. You know the thoughts I have not voiced, the tears I have cried in private, the struggles I have hidden from everyone else. And yet You do not turn away. You have engraved my name on the palm of Your hand. Today I choose to bring myself to You without pretence — the real me, not the version I present to others. Receive me as I am, and love me into who You are calling me to become. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Evening Devotion**Seen and Not Forgotten****Evening Reflection**

As you settle into the quietness of this Thursday evening, carry with you the image from this morning: your name engraved on the palm of God's hand. It is a striking image precisely because it is so physical, so permanent, so impossible to overlook. God does not need a reminder to think of you. You are built into the very posture of His hands.

Today may have contained moments where you felt overlooked — in a conversation, at work, in a relationship. The world is often careless with people, and most of us know what it feels like to be unseen. But the spiritual reality, the deeper truth beneath the surface of every ordinary Thursday, is that you have been seen every moment of this day. Not surveilled in a cold or mechanical way, but watched over with the attentiveness of a love that counts hairs and records tears.

Perhaps there was a moment today when you felt that attentiveness — a quiet sense of peace that arrived unexpectedly, a provision that came just when you needed it, a conversation that felt like more than coincidence. These are the fingerprints of a God who has not forgotten you. Not for a single moment.

Evening Reflection

Where did you feel most seen today — either by God or by another person? How did that experience of being known affect you?

Evening Prayer

Lord, thank You for seeing me today in all the ordinary moments I almost missed. Thank You that my name is written on Your hand and that You have not forgotten me. As I rest tonight, I release the need to prove myself or be noticed by others. It is enough to be known by You. Amen.

Friday - Chosen to Love: Living the Refrain**Morning Devotion****Today's Verse**

A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. (John 13:34-35 NIV)

Devotional Thought

We have spent this week meditating on the enduring, unfailing, intimate love of God. We have received it from Psalm 136, been assured of it in Romans 8, encountered it in the person of Jesus in Romans 5, and marvelled at its intimacy in Isaiah 49. But now, on this final day, we come to the unavoidable question: what does this love ask of us in return?

Jesus' answer in John 13 is both simple and enormously demanding. Love one another. As I have loved you. The standard He sets is not a vague aspiration to be generally pleasant. The standard is His own love — the love that washed feet, that welcomed sinners, that forgave betrayers, that laid down its life. This is what we are called to embody in our relationships, our churches, our communities, and our world.

Jesus uses the word 'command' deliberately. This is not a suggestion or a recommendation. It is a command — and one of the very few places in the Gospels where Jesus uses that language. It tells us something important: love, in the Christian life, is not primarily a feeling. It is a decision, a discipline, a practice. We are commanded to love because love can be chosen even when it is not felt, enacted even when it is costly, extended even when it is not reciprocated.

And the purpose of this love is missional. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples. The love we show one another is not merely for our own benefit or for the health of our community, as important as those things are. It is the primary witness the church offers to the watching world. Not our buildings, not our programmes, not our theological precision — our love. When the world looks at the church and sees people genuinely, sacrificially, joyfully loving one another across every boundary of culture and class and background, it encounters something that cannot be explained apart from God.

This brings us back to the beginning of the week. We have received a love that endures forever. Now we are sent to reflect it. The refrain of Psalm 136 was not meant to stay within the walls of a worship service. It was meant to be lived out on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday — in our homes, our workplaces, our streets, and our churches. The love of God endures forever. And we are called to be its visible, tangible, everyday expression.

Reflection Question

Who in your life is most difficult for you to love consistently? What would it look like to love that person 'as Christ has loved you' — not based on how you feel, but as an act of obedience and grace?

From Sunday's Sermon

"The love of God transcends Sunday mornings. The love of God runs into Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. So that at work, you are radiating that love. At home, you are radiating that love. On the streets, you are radiating that love."

Today's Application

As this week's devotional series draws to a close, the application is both a review and a commission. First, look back over the week: how has your understanding of God's love for you deepened? What has shifted in your heart? Write down one truth about God's love that has most impacted you this week and commit to carrying it forward. Second, look outward: identify one specific relationship — at home, at work, in your church, or in your neighbourhood — where you have been withholding love, perhaps through coldness, avoidance, or unforgiveness. Make a concrete decision about one action you will take to extend love in that relationship this week. It does not need to be dramatic. It might be a conversation, an apology, an invitation, or simply a sustained decision to pray for that person daily. The love of God endures forever — and we are called to be its living, breathing, everyday refrain.

Morning Prayer

Lord Jesus, I have spent this week receiving Your love, and I am grateful. But I know that love was never meant to stop with me. You have loved me so that I might love others. Forgive me for the times I have kept Your love to myself — when I have been cold, distant, unforgiving, or simply too busy to notice the people around me who need to experience Your hesed through my hands and my words. Fill me afresh with Your Spirit. Let Your love flow through me today — at home, at work, on the streets, in my church. Let the world see something in me that points beyond me to You. His love endures forever. Let me live as though I believe it. Amen.

Evening Devotion

The Refrain Continues

Evening Reflection

The week is drawing to a close, and it is worth pausing to notice what God has been doing in you through these days of reflection. You began on Monday with the ancient refrain of Psalm 136 — His love endures forever — and you have carried it through five days of Scripture, prayer, and honest self-examination. That refrain has not changed. It was true on Monday morning, and it is true on Friday evening. But perhaps you have changed, even a little. Perhaps the love of God has found a slightly deeper root in you this week. Perhaps a fear has loosened its grip, or a shame has been

named and brought into the light, or a relationship has been seen with fresh eyes.

This is how spiritual formation works — not in dramatic leaps, but in the slow, faithful accumulation of days spent returning to the truth. The psalmist sang the refrain twenty-six times not because he forgot it after the first, but because repetition is how truth becomes conviction, and conviction becomes character.

Go into your weekend carrying the refrain with you. His love endures forever. Let it be the lens through which you see your rest, your relationships, your worship, and your ordinary Saturday morning. And as you gather with God's people on Sunday, bring this week's discoveries with you. The love of God is not just a devotional theme. It is the heartbeat of everything.

Evening Reflection

What is the one truth about God's love that you want to carry from this week into the weeks ahead?
How will you make sure you do not lose it in the busyness of life?

Evening Prayer

Father, thank You for this week. Thank You for Your Word that has spoken into my heart, for Your Spirit who has been at work even in the quiet moments, and for the love that has held me through every day. I do not want to leave this week behind without carrying something of it forward. Let the truth that Your love endures forever become more than a phrase — let it become the foundation of how I live, how I love, and how I follow You. His love endures forever. I believe it. Help me to live it. In Jesus' name, Amen.