

Psalm 136:1 - Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His love endures forever.

The words of this psalm rehearse the goodness of God. Each one of its 26 verses have a common refrain, "His love endures forever." God is love, and goodness is His nature. Yet sometimes we question the goodness of God. When sickness assails us, when we lose a beloved family member or friend, when the storms of life come crashing in, we wonder where God is in the picture.

The other day, I was visiting a patient and his wife as they were waiting for test results. He had been diagnosed with stage 4 cancer and the tests would indicate the extent of the metastasis. I asked if they were feeling the presence of God.

"Well, my husband is...but not so much for me," the patient's wife quietly responded. As tears began to flow, I embraced her and just let her cry. When the tears were spent, I shared a little of my own journey with them.

"I am a two-time cancer survivor," I said. "While everyone's story is different, Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. He never afflicts His children, but we live in a broken world where there is sin, sickness and sorrow. Yet God promises to be with us, no matter what we endure. Whatever we go through, He goes through right along with us.

"He loved us so much that He sent His Son to overcome the power of sin, death and disease on the cross. He offers Himself freely to all who come to Him, assuring us of everlasting life in His presence. He gives us His Word to guide us into all truth, and He deposits His Spirit in us as a guarantee of what is to come.

"When I was first diagnosed with cancer in 1990, I was overcome with fear, even though I knew Jesus was with me. But one day, I was reading the psalms and a passage from Psalm 27:13-14 seemed to have been highlighted just for me:

'And I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart, and wait for the Lord.'

Hope penetrated my heart with those words and I grabbed onto that promise. I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living! As I rehearsed that truth, I began to see the fruit of it."

After I shared these things, the patient's wife began to recount God's goodness - a beautiful marriage, four wonderful sons, meaningful careers

in education, their loving and supportive church family. Light began to overcome the clouds of darkness as she affirmed all that God had done.

As hope was restored and faith rose, I asked if we could pray together. The three of us joined hands, thanking God for His faithfulness and asking for His healing presence to remove all disease from this patient. As we finished, this dear man said, "God is good. All of the time."

No matter what you're facing today, know that God is good and He is with you. Because He is good, He withholds no good thing from you. Because He is good, the good work that He has begun in you will be completed. Because He is good, His love endures forever. Amen.

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