

## His Compassions Never Fail

✠ **New every morning** (vv.22-24)

✠ **Worth the wait** (vv.25-27)

✠ **Distilled in silence** (vv.28-30)

✠ **Willed by unfailing love** (vv.31-33)

In the name of Jesus, God's compassionate Heart in human flesh and blood, dearly redeemed believers:

When my older sister was in Africa with her missionary husband, she was afraid of being robbed – until the night they heard a thief taking shoes and sunglasses from their living room. Then, no more fear.

A pastor preached in a conference sermon how his father-in-law started weeping on the way to the hospital where his wife had just died. "I'm not crying for sorrow," he explained. "I'm just so grateful she's at home with Jesus. I feel such joy to have His comforting presence at a time like this."

Until we follow our Good Shepherd through the valley of the shadow of death, we can't fully appreciate how firm is our confidence to say, "***I will fear no evil, for you are with me.***" (Psalm 23:4) Truly it is down in the valleys that we grow. And from the depths of near despair, the God-inspired author of our text wells up in heartfelt gratitude to God because **His Compassions Never Fail**. They are...

✠ **New every morning** (vv.22-24)

This is likely one of the Bible books you're tempted to skip. "Lamentations? How depressing!" When people finally do open their Bibles, they want to feel better. Isn't that why the entertainment churches so easily "Hollywood" their way into American hearts? Take away the cross; put up a big screen. And make sure there are plenty of options for the kids to get smiling pictures in the paper.

***"There is nothing new under the sun."*** (Ecclesiastes 1:9) God's ancient people of Israel tried to do the same. They ignored God's judgment on the ten northern tribes when Samaria was captured, destroyed and deported by the Assyrians over a century before. They refused to believe the weeping prophet Jeremiah because his message was too depressing. The Jews in Jerusalem chose instead to believe the false prophets, the popular preachers who talked peace and prosperity, all the good things they wanted to hear. Two earlier deportations by the conquering Babylonians did not seem to blip their spiritual radar. But God's promises never fail. When He says, "Repent or perish," He means it. Finally in 586 B.C. everyone could see God's seriousness as Jeremiah walks about the smoldering ruins of Jerusalem and laments: ***"How deserted lies the city, once so full of people...."*** (1:1) None of us will ever know Jeremiah's dreadful despair in the rubble of the capital city and the destruction of the LORD's temple.

The view from here reminds me of riding through the mountains on our family vacations. Out the windshield, it looked as if we were going downhill. But out the back window we seemed on the way up. Until you listened to the 4-cylinder, air cooled, VW engine, you really could not tell. Just when we think we've dropped into despair with Jeremiah, he breaks out with this: ***"Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him."*** This is truly...

✠ **Worth the wait** (vv.25-27)

Does it get easier to wait when you are older? Maybe a year doesn't seem as long when you've had a few beyond your teens. But four years of high school and four years of college with more for grad-school, can look like "forever" from behind report cards and term papers. It's tough enough academically, but if you fall in love, graduation seems to move a few thousand miles away in your life.

But even here struggling behind the clock and the calendar we find how true it is of God that **His Compassions Never Fail**. We are tempted to give up too soon whenever the going gets hard. Short cuts through classes, student loans instead of work, stolen pleasures outside of marriage – all these have in common this sinful heart that does not want to wait. Pour in a few hormones and mix with human pride, and you have a suicide bomb beside the highway ready to destroy your HUMV.

Down here in the dusty battlefield of life, we desperately need the LORD's call to repentance for being so impatient. At every age we need His blessed assurance that since **His Compassions Never Fail**, it will always be **Worth the wait** with God. *“The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. It is good for a man to bear the yoke while he is young.”* The sooner you learn in your youth to wait in hope seeking the LORD, the stronger your faith will be as He leads you through the shadowy valleys filled with blessings that are...

### ✠ **Distilled in silence (vv.28-30)**

Wouldn't it be true that one of the hardest lessons for Grandpa to teach his little grandson or granddaughter is to stay very still and quiet in order not to spook the fish? Hunting with your Dad you may have had a tough time learning that just because you can't see the deer or pheasants, doesn't mean they don't see you. With whatever respect is due the speedboat racers among us and those in love with their Harley "Hogs," there's really a lot of life you'll never see going so fast with those deep throat pipes.

How far beyond the physical isn't this true in the sanctuary of our souls? **Silence** in the midst of suffering is so important, that Martin Luther even used a Latin word to describe such times of temptation for pastors. Along with prayerful meditation and the study of Scripture, Luther noted the need for *tentatio*, those times of grief when God tests our hearts to see if we only preach comfort to others or trust His Word ourselves. One thing I've learned in the darkness of *tentatio* is the importance of Jeremiah's advice: *“Let him sit alone in silence, for the LORD has laid it on him. Let him bury his face in the dust—there may yet be hope. Let him offer his cheek to one who would strike him, and let him be filled with disgrace.”* I'm not entirely sure how this works, but whenever I get down on my face and confess my sin to God, it helps me look up. When I think of how much I deserve God's wrath and punishment for my sins, it dawns on me that I can thank God for whatever grief has come my way because this is nothing close to hell. Jesus suffered disgrace in my place. Is it too much to ask that I pick up my cross and follow Him? Like the sunshine breaking through on God's distillery, He lifts you up to sip His love in **silence**.

### ✠ **Willed by unfailing love (vv.31-33)**

Could you ever have that powerful proof without first mashing the corn or grain or potatoes? Can the fine red wine emerge from the vineyard without the treading of the grapes in the winepress? Can God ever bless our hearts with His unfailing compassion without first softening them in the tenderizer of *tentatio*? No matter how deep your grief, this too shall pass. Start early to pray for God to help you learn whatever lessons you can to get the most possible mileage from this pain. *“For men are not cast off by the Lord forever. Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love. For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men.”*

Maybe sometimes we get angry at God. We may even question His wisdom and judgment by asking, “Why me, Lord?” But that's because we run like most of Jesus' disciples away from the cross instead of kneeling with the women and faithful John at our Savior's feet. Look long and hard at those wounds in His feet and hands. See the crown of thorns with which they mocked God's own Son. But then look into His eyes to see how all of this was **Willed by God's unfailing love**. Every tear you shed, Jesus is crying with you. Every sigh echoes even now in God's own heart. Every twinge of pain and throb of passion fills up the cup of Christ's suffering on our way to heaven's bliss and glory. It's hard to see in the ruins of the city. But right where you think the pain is beyond enduring, there the dear Holy Spirit calls to mind: *“Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.”* Wait quietly in this new day of God's **unfailing love**. Soon we shall see the salvation of our God. Time and eternity will tell the whole story: **His Compassions Never Fail**. Amen.

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New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church  
180 County Rd F - Shoreview, MN 55126