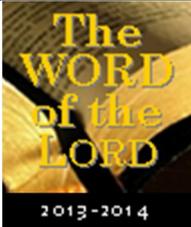


<h1>HESED</h1>  <h2>Steadfast Love Lovingkindness</h2>	Transliteration: <b><i>Hesed</i></b> <b><i>Checed</i></b> <small>(conversion from Hebrew to English)</small>	
	Pronunciation : <i>heh'-seh'd</i> <i>kheh'-sed</i>	
	Strong's: G2617, 2618 checed	
<b>Definition:</b> noun. A central theological term describing human relationships as well as the character of God. The Old Testament's highest expression for love. It is a love that remains constant regardless of the circumstances. The term is one of the most important in the vocabulary of Old Testament theology and ethics.		
<b>This Month:</b> The Year of Spiritual Growth: Study	<b>Sermon:</b> "Try Harder?" Rev. Ralph Herbert, 2/2/14	
<b>Scripture Focus:</b> Exodus 34:1-9; Psalm 136:1-9		

The word "hesed" is one of the most frequently occurring words in the Old Testament and has many translations in reference to the context in which it is used. It seems the most common translation has to do with the steadfast love that Our Lord God felt towards the people of Israel, those He protected, comforted and truly loved as His own. His was and is a covenantal love that required positive adherence to His Law for those who were loved. As often as God saw that His people did not hold up their end of the covenant, God never turned His back or forgot the promises He made to them. This is a promise for all who love and obey God, for His steadfast will endure forever.

Strong's Concordance says the word is used 253 times in 241 verses (NASB) in the Old Testament. It is variously used to describe steadfast love, lovingkindness, grace, compassion or mercy, loyalty or favor, goodness and devotion.

The first usage of the word "hesed" occurs in the Book of Genesis. As early as the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter, "hesed" is used in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. In Genesis 19:19 Lot has been informed that God intends to punish the city of Sodom for its evil ways. In verse 17, the word compassion is used to indicate that God has found favor in Lot and his family and will save them from death if they will leave the area. In verse 19 Lot asks God for compassion or mercy for his family using the term lovingkindness (hesed) as he is convinced God's wrath will be widespread enough to consume the town to which he is fleeing. In Exodus 34, after giving him the Ten Commandments, the Lord proclaims to Moses, that He (the Lord) is "slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love." Earlier in the verse, the word compassion is also included as a trait of God's. Similarly in Numbers chapter 14, Moses reiterates the traits that God has spoken about Himself: "Slow to anger and abundant in steadfast love" as he pleads for God's mercy on the Israelites after they have rebelled against

the Lord and God threatens to destroy them. Passages in 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Job all contain references to "hesed" or the trait of steadfast love of God in relationship to His followers.

"Hesed" most frequently is used in the Psalms and refers to the godly trait of steadfast love. Perhaps the passages where this theme or meaning of "hesed" as steadfast love are best depicted are in Psalm 136. This Psalm is extolling the love of God in relation to His people and "hesed" translated as steadfast love or lovingkindness in reference to a trait of God is used 27 times. Each is in reference to it being an everlasting trait and each verse in the Psalm declares it in reference to a group of people or a person that God has a special relationship or to describe His chosen ones, the Israelites.

Another way "hesed" is translated is as favor. In many references, it occurs in conversation with one character to another. In Genesis 47 Israel, the father of Joseph, begs his son to show lovingkindness or favor to him and not bury him (after his death) in the land of Egypt, but to bury him outside Egypt with his (Israel's) ancestors. This is clearly in the context of a personal favor Israel is asking of his son. In the Book of Joshua, Joshua sends spies into Jericho in preparation for a battle. A harlot, Rahab, hiding them from the Jericho authorities, takes in Joshua's men. In return, Rahab asks that the men of Joshua's army show her family favor when the army comes to fight. The men assure her in Chapter 2 verse 14 that she will be shown "hesed" or favor and their lives will be spared. In Judges, the word "hesed" is used as favor or kindness as well. The House of Joseph sends spies to find a way into the city of Bethel. A man is approached on the outskirts of town and told he and his family will be spared or shown favor or "hesed" if he cooperates with their request to be shown the city entrance. He complies. In contrast, in Judges 8:35, the general Gideon leads the Israelites in a successful campaign against several nomadic tribes of Midian. On his death, however, the Israelites reverted to their old ways and began worshipping a false god and failed to show even "hesed" to the family of Gideon. Again in 2 Chronicles, we see that after a time when Jehoiada, the priest, served God upon his death, Joash the king begins to worship idols. He also kills Jehoiada's son Zechariah. As Zechariah is dying he begs God to avenge his death. Even though Joash was shown favor by God, the favor or "hesed" was withdrawn when he began his unholy ways. The Lord God's warriors destroyed Joash's army.

In 2 Chronicles "hesed" is translated as a deed of devotion or loyalty. Hezekiah the young King, son of David, brings reforms to Jerusalem by repairing the Temple and restoring worship there and unifying the Kingdom of Judah. Because of the faithfulness of the people in Judah, God saves the Jews from the Assyrian invaders. Hezekiah, for his faithfulness and "hesed" or deeds of devotion to the Lord God, is remembered in the visions of the prophet Isaiah in the Book of the Kings of Judah. Later in Chapter 35, "hesed" occurs in the context of loyalty or deeds of devotion when Josiah becomes King of Judah and also faithfully serves the Lord God. He is killed in battle with the King of Egypt, Neco. It is said Josiah's deeds of devotion are spoken of in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. In this context "hesed" is used to show a life of one who is faithful to the covenant established with God.

In the Book of Proverbs, the word "hesed" is commonly translated to mean loyalty of men to one another. Several verses used this word to denote the positive qualities in one who pursues loyalty and goodness. These terms are used interchangeably in Proverbs 20:6, Proverbs 20:21 and Proverbs 20:28. Loyalty by someone is portrayed as kindness towards another or as kindness from a ruler to his subjects.

In the Book of Hosea the word "hesed" is used for the kindness, also seen as devotion. If the context is devotion, the verses in which it is used are talking about a covenantal relationship much like a husband to his wife. In the case of disloyalty, as in a husband to his wife or vice versa, God will punish the offender by no longer being the protector or in a relationship with the offender.

## Sermon Scriptures New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

### Exodus 34:1-9

#### The New Stone Tablets

**1** The Lord said to Moses, "Cut two tablets of stone like the former ones, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablets, which you broke. **2** Be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai and present yourself there to me, on the top of the mountain. **3** No one shall come up with you, and do not let anyone be seen throughout all the mountain; and do not let flocks or herds graze in front of that mountain." **4** So Moses cut two tablets of stone like the former ones; and he rose early in the morning and went up on Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tablets of stone. **5** The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name, "The Lord." **6** The Lord passed before him, and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, **7** keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, yet by no means clearing the guilty, but visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." **8** And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped. **9** He said, "If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, I pray, let the Lord go with us. Although this is a stiff-necked people, pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance."

### Psalm 136 (NRSV)

**1** Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. "His love endures forever."  
**2** Give thanks to the God of gods. "His love endures forever."  
**3** Give thanks to the Lord of lords: "His love endures forever."  
**4** to him who alone does great wonders, "His love endures forever."  
**5** who by his understanding made the heavens, "His love endures forever."  
**6** who spread out the earth upon the waters, "His love endures forever."  
**7** who made the great lights-- "His love endures forever."  
**8** the sun to govern the day, "His love endures forever."  
**9** the moon and stars to govern the night; "His love endures forever."  
**10** to him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt "His love endures forever."  
**11** and brought Israel out from among them "His love endures forever."  
**12** with a mighty hand and outstretched arm; "His love endures forever."  
**13** to him who divided the Red Sea asunder "His love endures forever."  
**14** and brought Israel through the midst of it, "His love endures forever."  
**15** but swept Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea; "His love endures forever."  
**16** to him who led his people through the desert, "His love endures forever."  
**17** who struck down great kings, "His love endures forever."  
**18** and killed mighty kings-- "His love endures forever."  
**19** Sihon king of the Amorites "His love endures forever."  
**20** and Og king of Bashan-- "His love endures forever."  
**21** and gave their land as an inheritance, "His love endures forever."  
**22** an inheritance to his servant Israel; "His love endures forever."  
**23** to the One who remembered us in our low estate "His love endures forever."  
**24** and freed us from our enemies, "His love endures forever."

**25** and who gives food to every creature. "His love endures forever."

**26** Give thanks to the God of heaven. "His love endures forever."

## **Psalm 136 (NASB)**

### **Thanks for the LORD'S Goodness to Israel.**

**1** Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

**2** Give thanks to the God of gods, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

**3** Give thanks to the Lord of lords, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

**4** To Him who alone does great wonders, For His lovingkindness is everlasting ;

**5** To Him who made the heavens with skill, For His lovingkindness is everlasting ;

**6** To Him who spread out the earth above the waters, For His lovingkindness is everlasting ;

**7** To Him who made the great lights, For His lovingkindness is everlasting :

**8** The sun to rule by day, For His lovingkindness is everlasting,

**9** The moon and stars to rule by night, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

**10** To Him who smote the Egyptians in their firstborn, For His lovingkindness is everlasting,

**11** And brought Israel out from their midst, For His lovingkindness is everlasting,

**12** With a strong hand and an outstretched arm, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

**13** To Him who divided the Red Sea asunder, For His lovingkindness is everlasting,

**14** And made Israel pass through the midst of it, For His lovingkindness is everlasting ;

**15** But He overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

**16** To Him who led His people through the wilderness, For His lovingkindness is everlasting ;

**17** To Him who smote great kings, For His lovingkindness is everlasting,

**18** And slew mighty kings, For His lovingkindness is everlasting :

**19** Sihon, king of the Amorites, For His lovingkindness is everlasting,

**20** And Og, king of Bashan, For His lovingkindness is everlasting,

**21** And gave their land as a heritage, For His lovingkindness is everlasting,

**22** Even a heritage to Israel His servant, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

**23** Who remembered us in our low estate, For His lovingkindness is everlasting,

**24** And has rescued us from our adversaries, For His lovingkindness is everlasting ;

**25** Who gives food to all flesh, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

**26** Give thanks to the God of heaven, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.