

Jim Wilder on *Hessed*

Transcribed By Barbara Moon

These are rough notes.

The word *Hessed* is used 248 times in OT. In 149 of them it is translated as mercy. (others lovingkindness) Almost every Psalm has the word.

What is mercy? We usually think of it as something that I acquire, or that we give when we do not hold against you what you did wrong. It can be translated as kindness, similar to mercy. Other words we think of: Forgiveness, faithful love, love that persists, enduring love. Kindness can be instant and a first response like to a cat or dog or to a stranger. Or kindness can take a long effect. Lovingkindness is not just kind when God does it, it is a word for love. He treasures me. There is undeserved forgiveness. Out of the goodness of one's heart. A person who cares is a person who has *hessed*. It is translated Goodness 12 times-- to offer favor, grace, the receiver is someone special, can be pity, and it is a wicked thing onetime. Lev. 20:17 incest. Love in incest uses bad *hessed*. Cut off from people, bear own iniquity. Bad that sticks to you.

Hessed is enduring. In the NT there is no equivalent for *hessed*. The Greek uses *agape* as the closest. God so *agaped* the world. Enduring love, sticky, tenacious, merciful, lovingkindness, grace filled love. God was *hessed* toward the world. Long lasting, puts up with all kinds of wrongs, He has so much of this *hessed*, that He sent His son.

Problem we have as NT Christians is that we started with the Greek word, *agape*. We have heard many lectures on how love is used in the Greek. CS Lewis book *Four Loves* shows only one- *agape*- can we do voluntarily—the only one we can be commanded to do. But in what sense can we be commanded? Because we are looking from the other end we get it backwards. How do I like someone who is annoying me? What we are commanded is the enduring and merciful part of the word with the ones bothering us. Enduring is the commanded part. They will still be annoying.

Do we annoy God? Yes. He hangs in there. So use *hessed*. Num 14:18, great mercy—*hessed*-enduring attachment. Verse 19 greatness of your *hessed*. Put up with a lot, help us out of the trouble. Psalms so rich in the word. Used mostly in Psalms. Sing about it,

Tenacity to stick it out, one more day. Built into all the stories in NT. Tree that won't produce fruit, cut it down, let's try longer. Jesus says, throw some (manure) on it. The only place Jesus uses a vulgar word. Lost Coin, sheep, persevering love about aggravating people. Stoires help us understand.

When Jim was 19 working in a camp, seniors came in from inner city Chicago. Hard times, salvation army to our camp to get out to camp, birds, trees, One lady at camp very annoying. Special line for lunch, short line with walkers, rang food bell, this lady rushed in knocked over ones with walkers, demanded and pigged out, all meals, guard couldn't stop her. On top stunk to high heaven. Really bad. Refused shower, yelled, short temper unpleasant. Lady counselors, dragged her screaming and kicking 7 of them to give her a shower. It was awful. That afternoon talking to one of the men from the camp. He knew 19

languages, dressed nicely, refined gentlemen, he could talk about many subjects, very educated, lay It out. Lady walked by had been bane of the camp. Jim said how glad they were that they got her cleaned up. The man said, "That lady is my wife." Showed Jim the tattoo on his arm from the concentration camp. His wife had been a concert pianist, sophisticated. Nazis had done brain experiments on her and she had been this way ever since we were liberated. People say I should put her in a home, I just can't do it. This is Hessed. Then it dawned on JW why she didn't want to go t the showers. At that point the husband had been watching her for 30 years. Enduring love is what the Psalms sing about. Hard to describe with one word- Is it kind, patient, longsuffering, merciful?

Another lady years later, brain damage too from a car accident, impulse control problems, aware she could see when she messed up and got in trouble. The camp lady could not. Jim knew her 30-40 years and when she messed up, she would go back and ask God to restart her lovingkindness. So on the other side, we can return to God and give Him another chance to not give up as we don't give up on this one, that one. When we fail, lose temper too easily, hessed is not just for others problems but how we invite God into our life. Each spot needs His touch, bring Him back in no matter how many times I fail.

Psalms—substitute hessed for these other words.-- trusted in your mercy, heart rejoice, 17: 7, 23 mercy, 25 tender mercies, 26 before my eyes, 31 marvelous,

Jim went to the Sudan war zone to do trauma recovery. War going on for 25 years, no school, Met a lady who was trying to help. He asked her how doing without medicine, etc? Her son couldn't walk, wheel chair 25 miles through bush, no roads took 2 weeks, father had to agree, said no. She came back and kept helping others. Never gave up on her son.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 13 uses the word agape but he's trying to explain what hessed looks like to people using Greed. The letter is to the Corinthians who were impressed with power Christianity--speaking in tongues, prophecy, etc. Like now if Jim had lots of books, large audiences, a global ministry, a martyr, powerful witness. Paul is trying to explain the difference in acts of power, momentary flashes and this hessed. Read this chapter and substitute hessed each time it says love (or charity). Having hessed inside is what God is looking for to show that we are his people.

Other story from Sudan--Boy sisters, shelter, job at the hotel, took others in. leftover food. Cancer lady—what do with that year. Hard to find a word to do it justice. Not hard to see in the stories God's people live out.

Final exam of life when life is over—Did I have hessed? Hosea 6: 6, 10: 12, Micah 6:8, love hessed, Zechariah 7:9 show hessed.

In the Epistles and Jesus we will see what it looks like and even call it hessed, but never really find a word to do it justice. You will know in your life when it touched you, but less when flowed through you to someone else.

Lord, Show us your hessed, let it be in our songs, Flow it through us, bring us to return to You to be filled with it so that we will look like Your children to the world.