

EVANGELICAL BIBLE COLLEGE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



COMMENTARY

PSALM 119

by

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[BOOK 49-M]

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WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

Professor Simon Greenleaf was one of the most eminent lawyers of all time. His "Laws of Evidence" for many years were accepted by all States in the United States as the standard methodology for evaluating cases. He was teaching Law at a university in the United States when one of his students asked Professor Greenleaf if he would apply his "Laws of Evidence" to evaluate an historical figure. When Greenleaf agreed to the project he asked the student who was to be the subject of the review. The student replied that the person to be examined would be Jesus Christ. Professor Greenleaf agreed to undertake the examination of Jesus Christ and as a result, when he had finished the review, Simon Greenleaf personally accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

Professor Greenleaf then sent an open letter to all jurists in the United States saying in part "I personally have investigated one called Jesus Christ. I have found the evidence concerning him to be historically accurate. I have also discovered that Jesus Christ is more than a human being, he is either God or nothing and having examined the evidence it is impossible to conclude other than he is God. Having concluded that he is God I have accepted him as my personal Saviour. I urge all members of the legal profession to use the "Laws of Evidence" to investigate the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and if you find that he is wrong expose him as a faker but if not consider him as your Saviour and Lord".

HOW CAN I BE SAVED?

Salvation is available for all members of the human race.

Salvation is the most important undertaking in all of God's universe. The salvation of sinners is never on the basis of God's merely passing over or closing His eyes to sin. God saves sinners on a completely righteous basis consistent with the divine holiness of His character. This is called grace. It relies on God, so man cannot work for salvation neither can he deserve it. We need to realise that the creation of this vast unmeasured universe was far less an undertaking than the working out of God's plan to save sinners.

However the acceptance of God's salvation by the sinner is the most simple thing in all of life. One need not be rich, nor wise, nor educated. Age is no barrier nor the colour of one's skin. The reception of the enormous benefits of God's redemption is based upon the simplest of terms so that there is no one in all this wide universe who need be turned away.

How do I become a Christian?

There is but one simple step divided into three parts. First of all I have to recognise that I am a sinner (Romans 3:23; 6:23; Ezekiel 18:4; John 5:24).

Secondly, realising that if I want a relationship with Almighty God who is perfect, and recognising that I am not perfect, I need to look to the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour (1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:6; John 3:16).

Thirdly, by the exercise of my free will I personally receive the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour, believing that He died personally for me and that He is what He claims to be in an individual, personal and living way (John 1:12; 3:36; Acts 16:31; 4:12).

The results of Salvation

The results of this are unbelievably wonderful: -
My sins are taken away (John 1:29),
I possess eternal life now (1 John 5:11, 12),
I become a new creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17),
The Holy Spirit takes up His residence in my life (1 Corinthians 6:19),
And I will never perish (John 10:28-30).

This truthfully is life's greatest transaction. This is the goal of all people; this is the ultimate of our existence. We invite and exhort any reader who has not become a Christian by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, to follow these simple instructions and be born again eternally into God's family (Matthew 11:28; John 1:12; Acts 4:12; 16:31).

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Psalm 119

INTRODUCTION:

This Psalm is one of the many written by an “anonymous” author. Many have believed that David is its author, but we do not know the author, or authors, for there may be many. Spurgeon is one who championed David as its author, noting, “If David did not write it, there must have lived another believer of exactly the same order of mind as David, and he must have addicted himself to psalmody with equal ardour, and have been an equally hearty lover of Holy Writ.” Spurgeon’s books on the Psalms have been my companion through the dark days I have walked over the last nine years but I find myself differing with him on this Psalm, for his words above may refer to all the authors we know of in the Psalms, but especially of this one. The author, or authors, of this Psalm had walked through seriously difficult times, and their song is of the comfort of the Word of God in such dark places.

It is a very structured Psalm, as we will see below, and one that has many indications that it comes from a later period than David. I have always felt that it is a psalm that was developed slowly into its final form through the Babylonian Exile as a result of formal compilation of the twenty two short psalms/prayers that were written during the “death march” to Babylon by the Exiles after one of the captures of the city by Nebuchadnezzar (605, 597, or 586BC). It is a psalm that lifts up the Word of God, and it was that cataclysmic event that made the surviving people consider the centrality of the Word of God for them, and finally cast away all idolatry and their half heartedness towards God.

It was the destruction of the city and temple at Jerusalem and the associated Exile that led to the development of the synagogue, and with it the central position of the written Word in the life of the Jewish communities, and its regular reading to the people. This is a Psalm that magnifies the Word and it is often only the most difficult days that bring this truth firmly home to us. I am personally still under great pressure as I write these words, eleven years after the impossible situation began. I find myself in a place that is akin to the Exile, with no human deliverance visible, and no clear path out of the situation, and yet the assurance of God’s final deliverance clear, and the opportunities for worship and service greater than they have ever been.

In the midst of such a place, where tearful prayers are my companion at times in the darkness of the night, I have seen the Lord “magnify his Word above his name” (Psalm 138:2). Time after time, the Holy Spirit has drawn me to the precious promises of the Word to rest my tortured spirit upon, and day after day those precious passages of scripture that comfort my soul are found in these Psalms. Day after day I am used to seeing the glory of the Lord’s Holy Character emerge through the study of the Holy and dependable Word. Day after day I see that worship lifts the burden and fears of the soul. Isaiah 61:3. Day after day I weep for those who struggle through life in difficulties that could be eased by simply hearing and obeying the precepts of the Word of God.

Time after time I have seen that formal and structured worship stabilizes the soul under depressive levels of distress. I see in this Psalm especially the structure and content that only emerges from great suffering as a worshipful aid to stabilize tortured souls and have them rest in the only certainty that they can depend upon – the holy character of God seen through his Word. When there is chaos around us the formal structure of worship is often the only stability we can find. This study was done for EBCWA a full year after the others, and the delay was in the Lord’s plan, for I have survived a year in my place of confinement that humanly has been impossible. As I reflected upon this, I saw that it was the Word that had uplifted me day after day, just as it had the Jewish people of the Exile in Babylon.

This is a very formally structured Psalm, and is suited to formal worship for that reason. This is an alphabetical or acrostic Psalm. The uniqueness of which is seen in the Hebrew in that the first eight verses of the psalm begin with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet - *Aleph* (א); the next eight verses with the second letter - *Beth* (ב) and so on, through the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. This artificial and systematic arrangement leads to a psalm of 176 verses and as might be naturally expected, all continuity of thought is subject to and even sacrificed to that arrangement.

My suspicion is that this psalm emerged day by day on the “death march to Babylon” of either 605, or 597 BC, as the mature believers amongst the surviving captives reflected upon what they had left as they marched without their property and any hope of rescue into captivity. The last capture of the city in 586 BC is excluded, as the survivors of that were few, and were the “poor of the land”, not the literate and educated of the earlier two marches to Babylon. The captives could have selected a letter of the alphabet each day and developed each of the corresponding verses to reflect their meditation for that day as they trudged towards slavery. Once there in Babylon the entire psalm was put together in its final form, possibly even in the following century by Ezra himself.

The Exiles had only the promises of God’s Word to stabilize their sanity upon. There hope was the very Word that they had ignored to bring upon them this calamity. They saw as they reflected day after day that even though they had failed, the Word of God had not failed, for it was backed by God’s character, and so the promises contained in it would be fulfilled. God had not been able to depend upon them, but they could depend upon God.

Paul would later sum this up in his letter to Timothy. **2 Timothy 2:11-13**

*“11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:
12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:
13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.”*

The great commentator Barnes says of this Psalm; “It is a psalm, that may have been written to be *“committed to memory by the young, that their minds might be early stored with valuable precepts to be their guide in the journey of life”*. It sums up their spiritual journey to revival in the Exile, and thereby it sets the path to true Spiritual Revival for every generation that follows. Revival begins when people pray and gather around the Word of God and lift up the Promises of God above their fears and concerns.

Comfort comes when we lift the “shield of faith” above our tortured heads and quench the arrows of doubt and fear that the enemy launches against us. Ephesians 6:16. This is a Psalm that challenges us to see that when we are under satanic attack the Word of God must be more real to us than the enemy’s assaults and our other problems.

Keil and Delitzsch concur with Barnes and state - “In our German version it has the appropriate inscription, “The Christian’s golden A B C of the praise, love, power, and use of the word of God;” for here we have set forth in inexhaustible fullness what the word of God is to a man, and how a man is to behave himself in relation to it.”

The central theme of this psalm, a theme that is constantly portrayed, is the contrast between the evil path of the ungodly who reject the direction and comfort of the Word of God, and the path of blessings that flow from compliance with the Word. It is this very “Exile theme” that makes me believe it comes from that age. These people looked back with longing to the days of David, and they saw that to have blessing like David’s, they needed a faith built upon David’s legacy. They needed to ground their lives in, around, and upon the Word of God.

The hardest days for me over this nine year journey of mine have been the last ones, and especially as I reflect upon the slackness of God’s people towards the Word of God. I have been strengthened through my dark days by writing the words of the commentaries for EBCWA and by battle testing them through weekly teaching sessions in the Bible College of my local church. The hardest thing to see and experience this last year was to see cut backs in Bible teaching by so many churches which have moved towards a more entertaining focus, especially for Sunday evening services. So many churches have stopped Sunday evenings, yet the bars and restaurants are full! We cannot compete with the devil’s world for entertainment, but we have the only truth that saves mankind, and that needs lifting up.

I am more and more convinced that the only path forward for the churches is to lift up the Word. To honour the Lord Jesus Christ we must lift up His Word to us! There is a hunger out there in the world for God’s truth; the many conversions to Islam in the West testify to man’s deep longing for certainties regarding God and life. In our darkening days God’s people are rapidly dividing into two camps; the entertainers and the soldiers. The soldiers desire the true milk and meat of the Word, for they see the need for truth in the midst of the devil’s lies. I have proved again and again that God’s people will turn up for real systematic verse by verse teaching of the Word of God, for all who are engaged in the Angelic Conflict know they need God’s truth daily! 10% of my present church turns up at 7am on Saturday morning for a systematic verse by verse Bible study, and they are hungry for more, and revival is breaking out in the church.

As days darken those who desire to serve the Lord will grow increasingly hungry for the Word, just as the Exiles were. It was too late to deliver them from slavery, but not too late to deliver them into blessing in the midst of their slavery. Let us lift up the Word and feed the soldiers of the Lord, for they do His work, and it is only from those who are hungry for truth that the revival we need will come. God will use only those who pray powerfully and open the Word often and study it systematically. We are not called to make God’s people more comfortable on their way to heaven, but to train them for dynamic Holy Spirit filled service here and now. Let us not entertain God’s people – the days are too evil and threatening for that nonsense to go on any longer. Let us be in fear of the Lord’s judgment seat!

2 Corinthians 5:6-15.

“6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

12 For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.

13 For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”

Ten Hebrew words are used in this psalm possibly echoing the “ten words” – Ten Comandments, as given to Moses.

Commandment Occurs 22 times - meaning a specific command imposed by divine authority.

Judgement	Occurs 19 times -	meaning a judicial decision or sentence given.
Law	Occurs 25 times -	meaning the revelation of God's will for man.
Precepts	Occurs 21 times -	meaning mandates of God or injunctions, specific instructions.
Sayings	Occurs 19 times -	meaning an oral communication.
Statutes	Occurs 22 times -	meaning what is ordained, engraved upon the heart for mankind.
Testimonies	Occurs 9 times -	meaning what is witnessed to, repeated as significant for life.
Way	Occurs 13 times -	meaning a trodden road or path through life.
Word	Occurs 24 times -	meaning the clear articulation of God's Word to mankind.
Righteous	Occurs 12 times -	meaning what is right and proper before God.

Dr W G Scroggie, the great Bible teacher of the middle years of the twentieth century referred to this Psalm as "The Law of the Lord, and the Lord of the Law". He notes that each of the twenty two sections of the Psalm have eight verses, and notes that the number eight has great significance. Seven is the Hebrew number of perfection, or completion, but eight is the number of resurrection, the number of super-abundance. As he states it well, "Seven is enough, but eight is more than enough.... Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the (new) week, which was the eighth day, Saturday being the seventh day of the Jewish week. This superabundance beyond completion is shown in Psalm 119 in respect of the Law of the Lord, the Word of God...."

The Word of God is the only sure foundation for our mental stability as we walk through this present world, for in the Word we have our "Daily Orders" as the Lord's soldiers. In it we also have our worship manual, and the letters to our soul and spirit, written by those who also have loved our Lord and Saviour. The Word of God is also the Letter of Love to the believer – the words given through men like ourselves, who touched the heart of God, and whose hearts were touched by God. In this Psalm we get to the heart of worship and therefore the centre point for human stability on the battlefield of the Angelic Conflict. This Psalm before us is a battlefield Psalm, and it is to be sung as we advance through the pressures of life to serve and worship our Lord every difficult day we face here.

My stability through dark days has been the indwelling ministries of the Holy Spirit as the Word is enlivened to my spirit and my soul rests upon the perfection of the Character of God and the Plan of God for my life. Those believers many years ago had lost all their physical goods and yet they were blessed in their relationship through faith. We are blessed through faith, by grace, as we rest in the tender mercies of God. The greatest mercy to us is the truth that our spiritual ancestors have left to us in the Psalms, and this one before us lifts up the Word. Let us join our brethren from past ages and let us sing of the glory of the Word of God from the places of pressure we find ourselves in this day. Let us lift up the Word of Truth, for this world needs it, and each believer's life depends upon its reception and application.

This volume on Psalm 119 emerges after a terrible and yet glorious year of service and learning, as I have been brought low, and yet been simultaneously lifted up by the truths of the Word of God. My prayer is that you might be lifted up by the Holy Spirit through the living Word, and see and live the truth that is in this Psalm.

The only light we have in dark days is God's light – and so let the truths of His Word be more real than your problems as you read these words. I write these things in a situation that remains hopeless from all human perspectives, and yet the Lord assures me of deliverance, but it is his deliverance not man's that I seek this day. Join me in this Psalm and seek the blessing of the Lord through his holy Word of Truth and know his deliverance yourself in the dark places that we find ourselves in all too often in our present world.

Psalm 119:1 (ALEPH)

"Blessed [are] the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD."

REFLECTION

'Blessed [are] the undefiled in the way'. In this verse there is a clear similarity of thought to that expressed in Psalm 1:1, where we see those who are blessed are those *"who walk not in the counsel of the ungodly, 'nor stand in the way' of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful"*, but walk in the will of the Lord as outlined in the Law of God. This first verse sets the basic principle of godly living, and the great divide between men – those who walk with God in obedience to his Law, and those who walk after their own hearts desires.

I have regularly challenged the people of my Saturday morning Bible Class this way – you will either be singing "Amazing Grace" with God's people, or joining Frank Sinatra and singing, "I did it my way". There is no middle ground in this life – we are either in line with God's holy and legitimate demands upon us or in the camp of the rebellious enemy. John 3:15-36. In dark days the only path is the one lightened by God's Word, and the only blessing is that which comforts the soul now and lasts forever. This first verse sets the tone for the entire Psalm – it is eternal blessedness that is up for man's reception, but we must walk through this temporary life God's way. There is true blessing nowhere else.

'Blessed' - *'esher is happiness* and can be rendered, *how happy* are they, how blessed in their soul and spirit. The **way** – *derek*, means a *road* or *highway*, and truly our behaviours each day set us on a course, or path through this life. Our daily decisions, based upon our true values establish our path, for our blessing, or our trouble and final judgment. We are all, by our decision making on a course to a specific destination, and the psalmist challenges us to set our path upon God's plan and purpose and his eternal values, as are contained in his Law. Remember that the "Law" contains both the ordinances and the sacrificial system; both God's holy demands and his grace provision to meet them.

We are “**undefiled**” only by either not sinning, or by dealing with our sins in such a way to eliminate their stain upon our life. We all sin and fall short of the glory/demands of a holy God. Romans 3:23. The only option for mankind is to take God’s holy demands seriously and so deal with sin in a thoroughly effective way, and that can only be God’s way, for it is God’s standards that are violated by our sin. God’s way is confession and forgiveness; it is by faith through his grace provision of the perfect sacrifice. Psalm 32:1-2, 51: 1-7, 103:10-17 112:1, 128:1.

The Psalmist challenges us to take God’s holy standards seriously, walk God’s holy and “narrow” path through this life, and deal with the stain of sin when it arises in our lives. Jesus would take up this concept and strongly challenge us all to establish our life path according to God’s holy demands. He challenges us all to make our sole desire to be to experience the blessing of God alone, not any thing that man can give for time alone. It is a challenge to us all to be clear about our values. If our values are eternal, then our blessing and happiness is eternal, but if our values are temporal, then any blessing/joy we have is temporary. If our values are godly and eternal we can see sin for what it is and deal with it in God’s way, and by walking on God’s path we are not always falling into sinful habits.

Matthew 7:13-23

“13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

Luke 12:32-35

“32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

35 Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning.”

We become those ‘**who walk in the law of the LORD**’ when we desire his path, seeing that the things of this world are temporary and the sinful pleasures associated with this world are pathetic and also fatal to our blessedness. The order is “**Walk!**” - *our* active commitment to the path is necessary and requires our deliberate *obedience* to the principles of ‘the way’ of the Lord. The psalmist challenges us to affirm our values by deliberate obedient actions that reflect our personal adherence to the principles of righteousness. The “fruit” of such a life is seen by all in “*ethical purity, principled and honest behaviour*” and is translated here as **undefiled** from the Heb. *tamiym*. Titus 2:11-14, James 2:18-26.

Jesus made it clear, as we see above in the Matthew passage, that he was calling men and women to a “narrow way” of life, and that his call was for all to respond to His demands upon their lives as Saviour and Lord. He was the way, the truth and the life of those who would follow Him. John 14:4-6. The early believers of the Jewish Church were known as “people of the way” and persecuted by the authorities because of their commitment to the Lord’s path. Acts 9:1-2, 22:4. God’s committed people have always been attacked by those who reject the “narrow way”, preferring the broad and popular path of man’s inventions. We are called by the Psalmist to value God’s opinion of us ahead of our peer’s opinions, and walk God’s way.

Law – torah, direction or instruction speaks specifically of the first five books of the Bible, written by Moses for the orderly living and material prosperity of the nation of Israel. God has made his policy for mankind clear through his revelation in the scriptures, and the Law of Moses certainly sets out the standards of holiness with a clarity unlike any document from the ancient world. The challenge for mankind down the ages has been the same in every age; will we seek the Lord’s path or walk our own? Will we seek the “well done” of the Lord our God, or will we follow after our own evil imaginings? Will man acknowledge God’s holy demands over their lives, or will that man do what “seems right in his own eyes”. Ezekiel 11:19-20, Hosea 14:9, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2.

APPLICATION

Blessedness is the fruit of righteousness. There is no other path to happiness in this life, and no other source of certainty for the next, other than obedience to the holy demands of God over our lives. Let us prayerfully seek the Lord’s path daily, bringing every thought and action into captivity to the will of God for us. Romans 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 10:5. Let us be as prayerful as the reality of the Angelic Conflict demands we should be! There is for each man and woman only holiness and blessedness, or sinfulness and disaster!

God's standards do not change through time. God is holy and those who seek to serve the Lord and hear his "Well done" must desire holiness in their life and deal with sinful thoughts and actions quickly. Slackness in life focus leads only to increasing disaster for the careless man or woman. The psalmist urges us to focus all our energy upon the path of God for us through the devil's world, so that in spite of the pressures we will face, that we serve our Saviour and enjoy the happiness of his fellowship now and forever.

Notes

Psalm 119:2

"Blessed [are] they that keep his testimonies, [and that] seek him with the whole heart."

REFLECTION

In the Hebrew manner the psalmist now adds detail to what he meant in vs.1 as '*the way*' of God, and '*the walk*' of the undefiled. This is referred to as "Hebrew Parallelism", where the second verse expands upon and builds upon the first, and the makes its point using the same structure as the first verse.

'Blessed [are] they that keep his testimonies': To keep God's testimonies is to '*walk in the way*' of the Lord. The words used and the structure of the two verses indicates a real concentration upon the opinion of the Lord and the standards of the Lord. The truly blessed person is the one who considers God's opinion ahead of man's, and who values God's standards ahead of any human based standards. The concentration on pleasing God is serious, and the person who desires to know blessing guards the Word of God in their heart, and guards their decision making to ensure they always keep the Lord's Word. The desire to please God is the heart of the believer's blessed life. Deuteronomy 28:1-6, Psalm 25:10, 105:45.

There is often a great personal, internal battle between the fleshly and temporary desires of the Old Sin Nature and the eternal desires of the spirit. For the Apostle Paul that battle raged within him at times, and every true child of God is encouraged by Paul's battle, as he describes it in Romans Ch. 7:14-8:2. In God's grace and mercy we can draw great comfort from the words of the psalmists, for they remind us often of the certainty of God's tender mercies towards us in our failures and foolishness. We all thank God for the words of Psalm 103.

Psalm 103:10-18.

- 10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*
- 11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.*
- 12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*
- 13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.*
- 14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.*
- 15 As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.*
- 16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.*
- 17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;*
- 18 To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them."*

"[And that] seek him with the whole heart": To **seek** God with **the whole heart** is to give oneself to God – to be abandoned in your love and desire to serve and worship the Lord. It is a passionate, whole-hearted love and obedience that God seeks from those he made to worship Him. The Proverb writer is more blunt, saying, "My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways." Proverbs 23:26.

Whole heart – '*kol leb*'. God wants us all, and all of us. The Lord does not want to share the love of man with any demons and fake gods. Exodus 20:1ff. The command here is comparable to the New Testament command to "*love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind*" (Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27). There is the blessedness of mental and spiritual peace when you are total in your commitment to God, having then "*a peace that passes all understanding*" (Philippians 4:7). It is this experience that is an earthly experience of eternal life, for "*To know you, the only true God, and to know Jesus Christ, the one you sent, is eternal life*" (John 17:3).

Too many people act as if they can have blessing with minimal effort in their walk with God, and yet they would be offended if their loved one had the same attitude to them in their marriage. How much do we hold back of ourselves from a deeply loved one? The answer is, if we love someone with all our heart, we withhold nothing from them. Why do we

then hold back obedience from the Lord our Creator, Saviour, and our King? God's logic in this is clear through the two great prophets, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Jeremiah 29:11-14.

"11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

12 Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.

13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

14 And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive."

Ezekiel 36:24-27.

"24 For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.

25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

APPLICATION

God seeks our whole hearted hunger for righteousness and our whole hearted service and worship. Do we honour the Lord with such service? Do we keep on seeking after his truth? Let us be as keen on God's truth as we are on learning things that will enhance our business/professional opportunities.

Jesus reminds us that the Lord's commands are "not grievous" to us, and yet we are too often slack concerned obedience. Let us be focused in our attention to detail in the Lord's Word. What he says we are to do, and what he demands we are to whole heartedly embrace.

Notes

Psalm 119:3

"They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways."

REFLECTION

There is both a positive and negative definition of the godly person. Those who walk in the ways of the Lord, who guard their life choices, value God's "testimonies", and search out the deep things of God '**do no iniquity**'. They actively reject evil, with the same passion that they follow after righteousness. It is this double decision making that keeps people balanced in their embracing of what is truly God's will for man. We are not just to avoid evil, we are to "hate evil" and avoid even the thought of it.

The psalmist makes it clear when he says, "Ye that love the Lord hate evil". Psalm 97:10. The proverb writer also notes strongly, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil." Proverbs 8:13. Amos urges his people to, "Hate the evil and love the good." Amos 5:15. Our values are to be passionately felt and expressed in life with deliberate actions both ways. We are to embrace the good things we can and hate and reject the evil things that we come across.

This does not imply arrogance towards those who fall short of God's standards, or that we believe in reaching personal perfection in this life, but we stand against evil and for the good whenever we can. We are to be guided in all our actions by our values and they are to be based upon the holy standards of God. We do not despise the weak who have fallen into sin or evil, rather we seek to rescue them in spiritual power from the deception that has held them captive. We will let nothing distract us from the path of God for us. Jude encourages the believers, "And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even their garment spotted by the flesh..." Jude 23.

In 1 John 3:9 we are told that "*Whosoever is born of God doth not (continue to) commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot (be in a habit of) sin, because he is born of God*". The Greek verbs in this verse (emphasized by the words in the brackets) point clearly to the meaning of John. Believers will sin at times, but a habit of unrepentant sin proves that the heart is not in the right place. John has previously told us that if we say we have no sin we are deceiving ourselves. (1 John 1:8-10). We will fall short and fail the Lord at times, but the life pattern of iniquity is the fruit of an evil heart, whereas the fruit of the contrite/godly heart is a pattern of behaviour that honours God and values other people.

At times we will all battle with our Old Sin Nature and have to fight hard against sin. Paul sums this battle up in Romans 7 "...I don't do the good I want to do. Instead, I do the evil that I don't want to do. Therefore when I do what I don't want to do, I am no longer the one who is doing it. Sin that lives in me is doing it. ... I am obedient to God's standards with my mind, but I am obedient to sin's standards with my corrupt nature." (Romans 7:25 & vs 19-20) GW Paul recognizes that living for God is living in obedience to the commands of God, and that means moment by moment walking through this life, making decisions each minute that honour God and reject evil.

APPLICATION

Have we seen evil for what it is and rejected its core values and local manifestations? Evil is subtle indeed and we can be easily enticed into compromise with things that destroy men over time. Let us be discerning of the subtlety of evil and reject the very appearance of sin and evil. 1 Thessalonians 5:22.

Notes

Psalm 119:4

"Thou hast commanded [us] to keep thy precepts diligently."

REFLECTION

You O LORD have **commanded** – *tsavah*, have *charged us*; have *given us the responsibility* to '**keep**' – to be custodian **of thy precepts**. The old Rabbis believed that in their teachings and additional precepts that they were being obedient to this verse; they were literally building a hedge around the Law and so ensuring people were kept well back from breaking any commandment. These rules would become the Mishnah and Talmud of Orthodox Judaism. Jesus words towards their rules were scathing. What they tried to do to keep the law and the people safe he rejected thoroughly. Clearly what was intended by the psalmist (and by God) is not what the Rabbis had done by Jesus day.

Matthew 15:7-9

*7. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,
8. This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.
9. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."*

Precepts – *piqqud* means *something appointed, a mandate* (Strong's). We are clearly commanded in this verse before us to guard these precepts and take them with utmost seriousness. Vine's exp. dictionary likens **precept** – *piqqud*, to *word, statute, testimony, law and covenant*. It also states that such words as *precepts, word, statute* etc., emphasize the authority of God and reveal "**the specific responsibility of man...**" to hear, believe, and obey his words.

Me'od, here translated **diligent**, has the meaning *exceptional effort*. Once again we have the seriousness of the commandments underlined by this word. Paul will pick this theme up in the New Testament when he compares the believer's life to the athlete and soldier, both professions that require total commitment and effort to win. 2 Timothy 2:3-7. Paul picks the athletic contests that could often end in death also – especially boxing. There is only 100% effort required of the soldier and athlete, anything less brings severe discipline, possibly death, certainly never victory.

We have the phrase, "sudden death play off" to describe the final round of sporting contests, but every day and every battle in the Angelic Conflict is a sudden death play off, where any errors by a careless believer may lead to their death or disgrace. Carelessly walking through this spiritual battlefield is foolishness indeed, and yet most believers live without enough care for the conflicts that rage around them. Let us be passionate and total in our commitment like the athletes and soldiers we are called to be.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

*24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.
25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.
26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:*

27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

APPLICATION

We are not here upon this earth to wait for heaven in a pleasant deck chair! We are here to serve, to worship, to run and to fight our invisible foes. Let us serve as the people God calls us to be, and reject any slackness that will bring disgrace and shame upon us.

Notes

Psalm 119:5

"O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!"

REFLECTION

'O that my ways': The psalmist, in realising the depths of God's command and the inadequacy of his nature to fulfil that command, is overwhelmed at the responsibility laid on him and his moral failure to follow through on God's holy demands. **'O that'** is a cry of pain and shame from the heart, and it is a cry for help. It is a heart felt cry for grace to intervene; it is a request for the LORD to act on his behalf, to stabilise his path.

We desperately need the direction of the Lord in order to have the clarity of mind and passion of spirit to keep to the paths of righteousness on our journey through the devil's world. We have the answer to this prayer of the psalmist in the ministries of the Holy Spirit within us. We have in the Holy Spirit's indwelling ministries a teacher, encourager, strengthener, and guide to every decision. The Holy Spirit will always convict within of truth, so the challenge remains for each of us, to heed the spirit and obey the commands.

Deuteronomy 5:28-33

"28 And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken.

29 O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!

30 Go say to them, Get you into your tents again.

31 But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which thou shalt teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess it.

32 Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

33 Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess."

The Old Testament saint had God's law as a guide for righteous living and the Temple sacrifices as their means of atonement when they failed and sinned. The New Testament believer has Christ as their guide in life and his sacrifice as the means for forgiveness and cleansing when they fail (1 John 1:9), and in taking hold of these 'provisions' from God, believers are established in the faith and enabled to keep his statutes.

Joshua 1:5-9

"5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them.

7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

God's Word is truth and we are established and stabilized in the truth as we stand upon the rock of truth and apply it into the fabric of decision making each day. We stand without excuse before the Lord in this, for the Word is clear and the policies of God are sure and certain. Our challenge remains to hear, believe, cherish, and apply the principles of the Word of God into life's minute details.

Philippians 4:6-9

"6 Be careful for (worried about) nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."

APPLICATION

Be worried about nothing, but be prayerful about everything. Let the truth grip your soul and be guided by it, not influenced by circumstances and pressures.

Be passionate about guarding the Word of God within your heart, and applying it into the details of daily life.

Notes

Psalm 119:6

"Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments."

REFLECTION

'Then shall I not be ashamed': *Then – az, at that time.* Let us put this into context with the previous verse. The psalmist is saying that every moment of life when I establish my decisions, and my life path, in God's statutes, then I will know only blessing, never embarrassment and shame. He strongly states, "I shall **not be ashamed**" - *bush*, I will have no cause for "*going pale*" with embarrassment and shame. When the Word of God guides our path we avoid all situations that will lead to our shame, and even to disappointment. Romans 9:33, 2 Corinthians 7:14, 1 John 2:28.

'When I have respect' - *nabat*, when I *look upon*, when I *pay attention*, when I open God's word in diligent Bible study, then alone do my decisions make sense and lead to blessing. God's Word will be a light to my path and a lamp unto my feet (Hebrews 4:12; Psalm 119:105). All that is required of each man, every minute, is that we pay serious attention to God's standards in all our decision making. If we respect God's Word, and show proper regard to God's standards, then we are kept safe, and we are guided into spiritually productive paths.

There are only two paths; the path of blessing and the path of judgment. They may be seen as the path of honour and the path of shame, the path of confidence or the path of embarrassment. There is no shame when we walk with God in obedience to His Holy Word for our decisions are godly and in accordance with the divine plan for our life. When we walk in his statutes there can only be blessing in time and eternity for us and those around us.

1 John 3:18-24

"18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us."

APPLICATION

Will we walk with God in obedience to His Word, or will we take a path of disobedience that can only lead to shame and embarrassment? That is our choice – there is no other.

Notes

Psalm 119:7

“I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.”

REFLECTION

When we face difficult times and terrible situations we face a choice – what attitude will we adopt towards them? The psalmist challenges us to refuse to be downcast by adversity, but in our **heart** (*lebab* – in the *inner man*) to affirm strongly, “I will be **upright** – I will stand erect with my face turned to God in praise”. Worship is the anti-dote to despair, as we see in Isaiah 61:3, and despair begins to be fought and defeated by the mental attitude that rejects it, and embraces praise and worship with a wholehearted passion.

The psalmist is calling us to see all things as part of the Plan of God for us, and so transform our view of the realities we face. The dynamic faith he call us to is not based on denial of suffering and pressure, but the embracing of it as an opportunity to worship and see God triumph over the worst the enemy can do to us. Psalm 9:1, 148:13.

Praise - *yadah*, means *to use or hold out the hand*, to hold out the hands in a spontaneous action of love, to ‘caress’ and be ‘caressed’ by the Father. Worship is based upon and centres round the love of God for us, and the sure knowledge of that love, when affirmed in troubled places, can transform the attitude towards the trouble we face. If we are beloved of God then all we face is within the plan of the beloved for us, and worship seeks to discover God’s path through the trouble to glorify the Lord in the midst of it. To stand before a loving God in worship means to stand with confidence in acceptance, and that means to be sure of our position before God – a position of grace, love, mercy, and forgiveness. 1 Chronicles 29:10-20.

As Isaiah had said in Isaiah 61:3, it is the “garments of praise that put off the spirit of heaviness”. It is only as we stand in obedience to God’s Word that we can stand erect, and with confidence approach the throne of grace and mercy and seek to worship, and also bring all our concerns to the one who loves us. Hebrews 4:16. True spiritual growth involves passionate confrontations with difficult issues, and that means adopting a dynamic approach to problems, not a passive one. It is an act of Holy Spirit strengthened will to face deep troubles with worship, seeing in them the path to glory through worship. As the Jewish people headed into captivity, away from all they had known into slavery, they faced this challenge and met it powerfully with the worship we see in this psalm. Their nation was transformed as a result.

Psalm 25:8-14

*8 Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.
9 The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.
10 All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.
11 For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.
12 What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.
13 His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.
14 The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.”*

I will praise thee **‘when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments’**: God’s righteous judgments may be memorised even by the casual student, but the psalmist uses the word *lamad*, which means “to goad” (with a rod of discipline if necessary) so that there can be no play acting – the response required is genuine. It indicates a learning process that is far from the ivory tower academics of the university or legalistic school that regards memory feats, whether the life is transformed or not. It is only as we “grow in the grace and the knowledge of God” in dark and difficult places that we truly learn He is king and lord of all to us. At times we may feel like we walk through hell itself, but by worship we learn that all places with the Holy Spirit’s fellowship are transformed into spiritual wine producing areas.

Psalm 86:11-13

*11 Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.
12 I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore.
13 For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.”*

The peaceable fruit of righteousness is the results of such discipline, *“Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees”* (Hebrews 12:11-12). It is of note that the Lord uses the grape vine as the most powerful symbol of spiritual growth and service in John 15:1-10. The Olive tree is also used in the Old Testament the same way. Grapes are most sweet and the wine the best after a terrible time of drought. The Olive Oil is also best after a time of drought. My nation is going through a time of drought at present with over sixty days without rain. The dairy farmers are complaining as stock must be killed for lack of feed, but the wine and olive oil producers are dancing in their orchards, for this tough year will be a “vintage year” that will be remembered as the best ever for many decades.

The worst soil and the toughest climate produce the best wine and the best olive oil, and just so it is with the believer in their spiritual service. We must embrace our difficult circumstances, in the filling of the Holy Spirit, and so transform them with God’s power and produce the “wine/oil of gladness” = true worship and spiritual service. Psalm 45:7, 100:2, Hebrews 9:1. It is an act of will that the psalmist calls us to embrace – the challenge to transform by worship trouble and suffering into the wine/oil of gladness and spiritual service.

Spurgeon brings out the wonderful truth that our praise of God’s Plan for us becomes deeper as we grow in greater understanding of God’s use of difficulty and suffering in our life. He paraphrases the psalmist, “My purified judgment shall admire thy judgments”. As we grow spiritually through dark valleys of pressure, we see in these circumstances the “beauty of holiness” when God reveals it to us, and in wonder at the plan, we tell him of our love with thanksgiving.

Isaiah 48:16-18

“16 Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me.

17 Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.

18 O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.”

APPLICATION

Have we faced the challenge today to transform our circumstances by praise and worship? Have we learned that the Lord’s Plan for us is for glory, and that any suffering is for good result in time and eternal rewards forever? Let us praise Him for his glorious Plan and for the power of the Holy Spirit that transforms our painful reality into joy.

Notes

Psalm 119:8

“I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.”

REFLECTION

‘I will keep thy statutes’: I will **attend to/guard** thy commands, thy laws. Once again we see the act of will under pressure, the firm resolve on the part of the psalmist to guard God’s law in his heart as the greatest treasure he owns. He is determined to keep the Law, because in honouring the Word, he honours God, and as he honours God’s purpose for his life he finds meaning and blessing. He knows the Character of the LORD his God and so he can stabilize his mind regarding the outcomes of every aspect of his walk with God.

He fears only walking through the pressure situations of this life without the fellowship of God, **‘O forsake me not utterly’:** The psalmist in effect is asking/pleading for the Lord, “not to leave me to my own devices”. The heart felt prayer of the mature saint in troubled days is always for the inner assurance that they are not alone in the midst of their troubles. We can do all things if the Lord strengthens us and accompanies us, but we can do nothing if we are alone. Matthew 28:20, Romans 8:28-36, Philippians 4:13.

Barnes notes: “There is no other ground of persuasion that we shall be able to keep the commandments of God than that which rests on the belief and the hope that He will not leave us.” It is the assurance of the presence of God with us that stabilizes us in pressure situations. I have reflected often in my counselling practise, facing difficult trauma cases daily, that I do not know how pagans can do such work, for I have the assurance of the Holy Spirit with me in each and every case I walk through. It is the comfort and instruction of the Holy Spirit that brings me through the most difficult places, and I can rejoice in advance in such places, for the Lord my God never lets me down! Psalm 38:21-22.

Clarke paraphrases this final phrase thus, “never leave me to my own strength, nor to my own heart!” We learn in adversity that it is the Lord’s presence alone that keeps us safe and sane.

DOCTRINES:

CHRISTIAN LIFE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – BLESSING OF THE BELIEVER

CHRISTIAN LIFE: CAPACITY FOR LIFE

THE SECOND STANZA (BETH)

Psalm 119:9

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed [thereto] according to thy word.”

REFLECTION

‘Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?’ Remember the likely context of this psalm as you face the question of this verse. There were only two categories of “young man” at the time of the Exile; there were those who were marched into Babylonian Captivity like Daniel and his friends, and those who died in the battles. 2 Kings 24:14, Daniel 1:1-7. Only the young man who takes notice of what is being said here will survive the battles of the Angelic Conflict. There is no safe pathway through this world other than the pure path that God directs us to through his holy Word. Proverbs 1:4-10, 4:10-13.

Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:1

9 Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

10 Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity.

12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;”

The word **cleanse** – *zakah*, means to be clean or pure, before the holy standards of God. As a result of the fall of Adam and the entry of sin into the world, we were all born into a sin saturated world and are “shapen in iniquity” (Psalm 51:5) by our bad choices. Yet we are all able to be made pure by means of the “washing of the water of the Word of God”. Ephesians 5:26. By our Old Sin Nature we may be prone to selfishness and all its subsequent vices, but through the indwelling Holy Spirit we are purified by the Word and cured of our sinful patterns of life as we obey its precepts. Christ centeredness is the anti-dote to self centeredness. 2 Timothy 2:22, Titus 2:4-6.

Spurgeon paraphrases the question in a clear and compassionate manner. “How shall he (the young man) become and remain practically holy? He is but a young man, full of hot passions, and poor in knowledge and experience; how shall he get right, and keep right? Never was there a more important question for any man; never was there a fitter time for asking it than at the commencement of life”. Those that hear in their heart, and follow through on this question to find the godly solution find life and health.

Deuteronomy 30:14-20

14 But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

15 See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;

16 In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

17 But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;

18 I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.

19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

20 That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”

‘By taking heed [thereto] according to thy word’: This blunt uncompromising statement reminds us that there is no other way to be happy in Jesus but to “trust and obey”. **Taking heed** – *shamar* – the very visual and powerful image of taking a thing so seriously that you surround it with a hedge of thorns to keep it safe. This passionate commitment to the truth of God’s Word must be the attitude of those who want to cleanse their ways for only if they take the Word of God with this seriousness will they be cleansed by the Holy Spirit’s work upon the Word. Psalm 1:1-3.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9.

6 *And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:*
 7 *And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*
 8 *And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.*
 9 *And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."*

How does God's Word cleanse a man's ways? "God's word is perfect, directing the soul to attitudes and actions that are pure; God's word is sure, giving wisdom to those who are naïve or foolish; God's word is right, inspiring the heart; God's word is pure, brightening the eyes; God's word is true and righteous altogether for in holding steadfastly to them a man is admonished and in them is abundant reward." (Psalm 19:7-11).

2 Timothy 3:14-17

14 *But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;*
 15 *And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*
 16 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*
 17 *That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."*

APPLICATION

Let us value the Word of God above all our worldly goods, for in it we have the path of life enlightened to us.

Psalm 119:10

"With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments."

REFLECTION

'With my whole heart have I sought thee': Whole heart - *kol - leb* means every faculty within me, my intellect, my will, my desires, all have been exercised whilst I have **sought** – *darash, enquired* with passionate desire after thee. We can have confidence before the Throne of Grace when we come with passionate commitment to a wholehearted faith that holds nothing back from God. Our life journey to date has taught us that anything short of total commitment is inadequate for a faith that is alive and real. Jeremiah 3:10, Hosea 10:2, Zephaniah 1:5-7.

'O let me not wander from thy commandments': The psalmist acknowledges his main worry that he will drift away into nonsense and distraction. He doesn't fear deliberately walking away, for he loves the Lord and his Law, but he fears just drifting away by slackness, tiredness, or getting distracted by the "things of this world". Satan's main attacks upon us centre round this aspect of daily life. He is smart enough to know what temptations we will spot coming miles away, and cunning enough to avoid those. He puts his best efforts into distraction, for if the saint can have his/her day filled with nonsense Satan has won a great victory. It is pointless and valueless activity that robs most believers of their peace of mind, their spiritual power and focus, and their eternal rewards. Ephesians 5:16, Colossians 4:5.

APPLICATION

We are serious about our faith and we are real in our prayers when we come with an open heart with all our passion and desires focused upon the best that God has for us, nothing else. Let us focus our minds on pleasing God for that alone matters in this life and through into the next. Let us guard our moments, and "buy up every moment of time", for God's glory. Let us not "wander off" into time wasting nonsense.

Psalm 119:11

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

REFLECTION

‘Thy word have I hid in mine heart’: The psalmist stands where all who seek the blessing of the Lord must stand, in the place where the Word of God is more valuable to us than any other thing. We show this value by guarding it like the treasure of the soul it is. God’s word is **hid** – *tsaphan, secreted, stored, treasured up* in the heart the mind and the soul of the passionate believer. There is no possession more important to them than their worn out Bible.

The application of the Word of God into daily life ensures that we **‘might not sin against God’**. It doesn’t matter what age we are, this principle applies to us all. Either God’s Word comes between us and temptation or we enter into temptation often. If we treasure the Word of God we hear its precepts as we walk through this life and we are able to resist temptations, for we hear the Lord’s Word to us in that situation and evil and sin are easily seen and avoided.

Psalm 37:31 states it well – “The Law of his God is in his heart – (so) none of his steps shall slide.” Let our prayer and passion be as the psalmist. “I delight to do thy will O my God, Yes, your Law in within my heart.” **Psalm 40:8**. Dr W G Scroggie says of this verse, “The best thing, in the best place, for the best of purposes.” God’s Word hidden within as the greatest treasure keeps us safe as the treasured people we are through the blood of Jesus. Psalm 19:13, 1 Peter 2:4.

Proverbs 2:1-12

- 1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;
- 2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;
- 3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;
- 4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;
- 5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.
- 6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.
- 7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.
- 8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.
- 9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.
- 10 When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;
- 11 Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee:
- 12 To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things;”

Sin - **chata**, is to *miss the way*, or as Romans 3:23 has it; sin is all that causes us to “*come short of the glory of God*”. Because God’s glory is his perfection, sin is therefore seen to be the ‘falling short’ of perfection, which makes it very clear that all of us have sinned. Those who say they have no sin are in effect saying they are perfect (cf. 1 John 1:8-10), and they make God a liar by such arrogant stupidity. Honesty is so much more intelligent.....

Let no man or woman be in error over this matter – all sin is to be faced as a direct insult to God our Saviour who made us and has saved us! Sinful actions, be they wrongful actions done or good actions not done (when they should be), are all insults to the one who loved us and gave himself for us. Sin is to be seen as very personal; it is never abstract, for it always insults God and His way for us. Let us face it or face consequences – for all stupidity has consequences and they can be fatal at times.

APPLICATION

Oh believer, let us hide the Word in our hearts each and every day, for then we are indeed “hidden” ourselves from evil days and bad decisions. Let the Word of God be your worn out and constantly read treasure.

Psalm 119:12

“Blessed [art] thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.”

REFLECTION

‘Blessed [art] thou, O LORD’: This spontaneous outburst of praise and adoration is from one who has begun to appreciate the depths of God’s grace, and once we feel this truth we cannot be silent. We bless and worship God, because God has first blessed us. It is astounding to me that people can keep quiet in the Lord’s presence, for I want to cry aloud “Praise the Lord”, and I am unashamed for I stand with the psalmist here. I want to continue to be overcome daily by the love of God for me. Let us bless the Lord.

Psalm 25:4-5

- 4 Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.
- 5 Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.”

Psalm 103:1-5

*“1 Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.
 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:
 3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;
 4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies;
 5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.”*

‘Teach me thy statutes’: **Teach** – *lamad*, is the same Hebrew word translated in vs. 7 as ‘learned’, where it’s meaning is ‘When I have been caused to learn’. The psalmist is asking God to ‘cause him to learn’ **thy statutes** – *choq*, ordinances, decrees, or edicts. The psalmist is prepared to let the Lord use any teaching technique he chooses to instruct him, even if it is painful. The psalmist’s desire is to learn and he is ready to suffer in the process. Are we this keen to learn of the Lord’s Character?

The psalmist desires real learning that transforms his daily life and makes him powerfully useful to the one who has given him everything of eternal value. He is ready to do anything that will make him useful, and he is ready to be led rather than direct the Lord by his prayer requests. Let us be challenged by this, for many times our prayers are telling God what to do rather than reporting for orders to the throne room of eternity! He is our king – so we are the ones who learn of him and take his orders.

APPLICATION

Let us bless the Lord aloud and silently. Let us bless the Lord in all our work, words and worship.

Let us commit ourselves to learn of Him, and from Him, and take His orders and receive His methodology, even if it hurts.

Notes

Psalm 119:13

“With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.”

REFLECTION

The writer of this section of the psalm testifies that he has always made known the ordinances/precepts and judgments of God. If I am correct in my deduction that this psalm comes from the march to Babylon of the captives then this verse is very poignant indeed. When we have lost everything and are marching off into slavery it would be of great comfort to know that we live and have on-going opportunity to serve God (unlike those who have died in the battles), and that this door of service may be open to us because we have honoured God’s Word.

The principles/doctrines of God’s Word are **of God’s own mouth**. We can down play the seriousness of biblical revelation at times in our modern information overload culture but the psalmist calls us to honour the words of scripture as if they are from “God’s own mouth”. It is the reminder to us that the biblical doctrine of inspiration is a very high doctrine, and that the scriptures are “God breathed”, and to be taken as absolute directives for every detail of our lives.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

*“16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:
 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”*

A simple rule of thumb in studying the scriptures was put well by the great language scholar of the twentieth century, Dr David L Cooper, “When the plain sense of a passage makes common sense do not seek any other sense for the passage or it is likely to be nonsense”.

APPLICATION

Let us ensure that we maintain a high view of scriptural inspiration, and demonstrate our belief by our passionate obedience to the words and the spirit of the Word.

Psalm 119:14

“I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as [much as] in all riches.”

REFLECTION

The way of God for the psalmist has caused him to **rejoice** – *sus*, “to exult, to be exhilarated” (the word expresses a high degree of joy). This joy is **as much as – al, or over and above** the satisfaction of riches. This man can speak of wealth, for he has been of a good family and lived well, for all the captives taken in 605 were members of the Royal House, and many from 597 were also royalty, or aristocracy/leaders of the land. Some will speak disparagingly of wealth, and betray their hatred of wealthy people, but that is only because they are envious of them and their wealth. The words of the psalmist tell us that he has known wealth in the physical sense, but the wealth of worship and the Word are far greater than all the wealth he has known in the palaces of men.

Taking the writer of this psalm to be King David Spurgeon notes that “... he knew the riches that come of sovereignty, and which grow out of conquest; he valued the wealth which proceeds from labour, or is gotten by inheritance: he knew “all riches.” He rejoiced in all sorts of riches consecrated and laid up for the noblest uses, and yet the way of God's word had given him more pleasure than even these.” C H Spurgeon. These sentiments apply to the young leaders that walked to Babylon in 605 and 597 BC equally well, for all grew up in the palace built by Solomon and knew all the wealth and power of rulership in an oriental court. When they marched naked to Babylon they saw fully and finally that it is only the wealth of the spirit that is eternal and secure, for none can take the wealth of the heart from us.

St Bernard (1091-1157) reflected upon wealth in this life in haunting words that I see played out with wealthy but stressed out clients weekly in my clinic. He states, “Riches are acquired with difficulty, enjoyed with trembling, and lost with bitterness.” This is all too true for pagans, and sadly even for some believers, but for all who are rooted and grounded in their spiritual life in Christ Jesus this doesn't have to be the way they live. All wealth for the spiritual believer is simply opportunity to serve the Lord more and give more, and there is no passionate attachment to wealth, only to Jesus. To what are you attached believer? If wealth is held loosely then it can be used by the Lord and when it is gone there is still the joy that was there all along, for that joy is in Jesus, never in things.

APPLICATION

Let us fill our hearts with the treasures of God's Word and let us fill up our store house of doctrine with truths that will keep us in difficult days. The heart alone is secure from thieves and that is where true treasure must be stored, as Jesus noted. Matthew 6:19-34. We are either securely attached to the Lord, or we are frantic in our attachment to things that we cannot take out of this world. Let us be sure our secure attachment is our relationship with the Lord and His Holy Word.

Psalm 119:15

“I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.”

REFLECTION

‘I will meditate in thy precepts’: This is not a detached intellectual approach, this is the passionate meditation of a man whose love for God and his word is unrestrained. We are called by the psalmist to be passionate in our love, and in our day we rightly speak of the “occupied with Christ”. He is to be our concentration and the focus of our passionate desire to worship in all we say and do. We are to meditate “in” the words of the Scriptures, getting into them and allowing their precepts to get “into” us.

This same attitude is also seen in the psalmist's use of the word **respect** - *nabat*. The Hebrew word *nabat* means *to scrutinize, to pore over, to search diligently*, all of which the old English word ‘respect’ covers. We are to show that we value the Word by pouring over it with passionate desire to understand and apply its precepts into our life. Those who claim to love the Lord and yet do not have worn bibles betray the hypocrisy of their words. Believers ought to be wearing out their bibles several times in a life time. How many bibles have you worn out believer? In the African Churches I minister amongst the most impressive thing is to see their tattered bibles, worn out in daily use, and all good missionaries take new bibles in for these passionate saints. They rebuke us!

God's **ways** is the Heb. *orach* in its most figurative; *orach* is a *well-trodden road*. It is a reminder that the statutes and laws of God are unchanging. He is the “same, yesterday, today and forever”. Hebrews 13:8. His laws, both physical and spiritual, are ‘his ways’ and those who would live with blessing will take the way of the Lord as their way through this life. The psalmist intends to do so. It is foolishness to ignore the “maker's manual” for any appliance we purchase, and we were purchased with the precious blood of Jesus, and so owe the Lord our obedience to his “maker's manual”. 1 Corinthians 6:20, 7:23, James 1:28, 1 Peter 1:18.

APPLICATION

He has made us for glory; His glory and our blessing. He has established his Word as his witness to truth and as our secure guide through this life that he has given to us. We owe him our very life and so let us serve him in accordance with his directions. We are “bought with a price” and so we must follow the maker and owner’s instructions if we would live with lasting blessing.

Psalm 119:16

“I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.”

REFLECTION

Delight - *sha'a'*, is to *sport with*, to *play with*, and to *take great delight in*. It is a word that is also used of a husband and wife playfully loving each other and delighting in each other. Is the Law of the Lord at the level of delight for us? Is there joy in our bible study, for if there is not, the Holy Spirit is in some way hindered. Let each church reflect on this question and answer it on their knees. I reflected upon the truth of this verse as I wrote these words, for I have no greater joy that studying, speaking of, and applying God’s Word into the reality of daily life. God’s Word is my delight, my joy and my strength of soul and spirit and in the darkest of times is it the anchor of the soul – Hallelujah!

‘I will not forget thy word’: The best way to keep something in remembrance is to use it constantly. What we do not use in our mind we will lose over time, as all who have ever learned a language know too well. To daily *‘delight’* yourself in God’s Word, in passionate bible study is the very best way to **never forget** his Word. In all your ways acknowledge Him and His Word will direct your paths! Proverbs 3:1-6. Let delight in the Lord fire your steps in dark places and you will discover sweeter worship than ever before in your life.

APPLICATION

Let us be determined to be blessed, and apply ourselves to the study of God’s Word, for in that place we will discover the joy of the Lord, and learn the delight of fellowship and worship that lifts us up beyond our problems to the eternal realities that we have inherited in and through Him. Let us delight in the Lord when alone and together.

DOCTRINE:**SOUL AND HUMAN SPIRIT**

SECTION THREE (GIMEL)

Psalm 119:17

“Deal bountifully with thy servant, [that] I may live, and keep thy word.”

‘Deal bountifully’ – *gama*, has the basic meaning of *recompense*, but not so much payment for services rendered as payment in advance to render further service. The psalmist asks the Lord to respond to his prayers in grace and mercy and answer so that he might live well and achieve and do more for God. It is not a “deal” that he asks for, but an opportunity for more service. Spurgeon paraphrases the request, “*Let my wages be according to thy goodness, and not according to my merit. Reward me according to the largeness of thy liberality and not according to the scantiness of my service.*”

The psalmist seeks to **live** – *chayah*. This is more than just to *remain alive*, it is to be *prosperous*, and it is for the purpose of **‘keeping thy word’**. As shepherds fenced their livestock with thorns to guard them from wild beasts, so the psalmist wanted to **keep** – *shamar*, to place a hedge of thorns about God’s word within his soul, and so prosper spiritually in the service of the Lord. He seeks more service and seeks God’s provisions for that on going service. He wants to abound in work for the Lord, centring his life in the Word and will of God and he wants to do it powerfully.

Note the mental attitude of the psalmist. He wants to live bountifully and serve powerfully. See his thinking and sit with this truth as it relates to your own prayers today. Our attitude determines our service, our giving, our witness, and the role we will play in the plan of God. If we seek “bountiful” life and Holy Spirit’s powerful ministries, then that is what the Lord in grace provides, but if we seek timid, cautious and half hearted service that is what we will reap.

Jesus encourages us to take him seriously and ask, as the psalmist asks here, for bountiful life opportunities to serve and win great eternal rewards and bring glory to God. Let us not live at a lower level than the grace level of Holy Spirit empowered service and worship. Galatians 5:4.

Matthew 7:7-11

*7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:
 8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.
 9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?
 10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?
 11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”*

2 Corinthians 9:6-11

*6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.
 7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.
 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:
 9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth forever.
 10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)
 11 Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.”*

APPLICATION

Let us be challenged as to our expectations from the Lord of his provisions for service. We can expect too little of the Lord when the Lord himself has asked us to expect great things from Him. We can ask little and wonder why we get so little. I am challenged by Spurgeon’s last words, “Believe More, Ask more, and so Receive more.”

Let us audit our prayers over the last days. Do we show the psalmist’s passion to receive more so that he might serve more? God wants us to abound. Let us rewrite our prayers this way and seek greater opportunities for service. Let us write “Great Expectations” above our prayers.

Notes

Psalm 119:18

“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.”

REFLECTION

Barnes lists all that this verse presents: -

- (1) That there are deep, hidden, secret things in the word of God, which are not perceived by the natural man;
- (2) That those things, when understood, are suited to excite wonder, or to fill the mind with admiring views of God;
- (3) That a special illumination of God is necessary that man may perceive these things;
- (4) That the proper understanding of these things is connected with prayer, and can be hoped for only in answer to prayer. We must all “sit with” deep things in the Word at times and await the Spirit’s instruction.

‘Open thou mine eyes’: *“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know [them], because they are spiritually discerned”* (1 Corinthians 2:14). If I am correct about the psalm dating from the Exile’s march to captivity this verse has very poignant meaning. The people went into captivity because of their persistent refusal to hear the words of the true prophets, and yet they delighted in the false promises of the false prophets. In Isaiah’s day, one hundred years before the Exile, the same thing had happened, but the people repented early enough to save the rump of the nation, but 80% had gone by then. Hear Isaiah’s words from the Lord on their previous slackness blow. In Jeremiah’s day (the time I believe of our Psalm) less than 5% would survive.

Isaiah 29:10-16

“10 For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.

11 And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed:

12 And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.

13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

14 Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

15 Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?

16 Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter’s clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?”

The people repented for a time in Isaiah’s day, but the slide back into compromise religion and open falsehood was nearly total by the days of the Exile. God in grace sent prophets again, and they were mocked and abused, Jeremiah barely coming through the sieges in jail, imprisoned by his own king as a traitor for telling the truth. Finally the words of the author of Chronicles record the passing of the nation into Babylonian Exile. The Psalmist(s) of Psalm 119 are determined not to repeat the disobedience that created the disaster; they are determined to study and hear all things from God, and sit with the “deep things” and the hard things, until the Holy Spirit enlivens the truth to them. They want their eyes open, not closed in distraction or deceit, or death under divine discipline like their ancestors.

2 Chronicles 36:14-16

“14 Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem.

15 And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place:

16 But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.”

We must be ready to “behold” (pay close attention to) the truths of scripture as they are revealed to us and not skip over any difficult thing, for the most difficult are often the most wonderful and amazing when their truth is seen fully. We are called to live with extra-ordinary Holy Spirit powered faith, not half hearted weak faith. We are called to live at a higher level than polite “nod to God” faith. We need to hear the words of James and remember that the Devil and his demons believe in God and that doesn’t save him, but they at least tremble at the thought, and yet so many believers do nothing! James 2:19. God calls us to more than theism, he calls us to dynamic faith in Jesus person and work, and such faith transforms our life and viewpoint on our life. Ephesians 1:15-18.

APPLICATION

Lord open our eyes to your truth, and Lord let us sit with the hard things in the scripture and wait upon the Holy Spirit, that we might know your truth and rest in it.

Lord, open our eyes to see the deep truths of the Word that we need to understand at this point of history. Lord help us in the power of the Holy Spirit to sit long enough with the truth to be transformed by it and live as we are called to live.

Psalm 119:19

“I [am] a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me.”

REFLECTION

‘I [am] a stranger in the earth: Stranger’ – *ger*, a *temporary inhabitant*, or one whose residence (on this earth) is of short duration. Lord teach us to number our days, for they are short: Lord help us to follow after biblical wisdom in this short life. Psalm 90:12. We are here such a short time, and as we all grow older this fact hits us like an express train. The days when we attended our school seem like yesterday, and yet it is decades back! This realisation of the temporary nature of this life often hits only in our fifties, but if the young receive this revelation early it stops them being distracted by the things that do not last. Ecclesiastes 12:1, 7, 13.

“Be in the world but not of the world” is a principle implicit in Christ’s words, *“I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world, Sanctify them (set them apart) through thy truth: thy word is truth.”* (John 17:14 & 17); (see also John 15:19, Romans 12:2, Galatians 1:10, Ephesians 2:2, Colossians 3:1-2 c.f. Proverbs 29:27).

The early believers saw themselves as “pilgrims” in a strange and temporary land. Hebrews 11:13, 1 Peter 2:11. They correctly realised that they were on a journey towards heaven, and that this universe of space and time is a temporary universe, and will be wound up and “put away” when the Angelic Conflict has run its course and the victory of the Lord Jesus is total. 2 Peter 3:10-18. In light of this reality believers were urged by Peter to “grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord”. Our values are to be educated by the reality of the temporary nature of this world. If all we see and touch will one day be wound up and put away, what attachment ought we have towards it?

Because we belong to God, and have eternal life in Jesus, we are strangers in a foreign land on this earth. We are here after our salvation as ambassadors for Christ, (2 Corinthians 5:20), under orders, for service. As such we have need of his **commandments** – *mitzvah*, his divine *commands*, so as to live a godly life and serve Him as his godly ambassadors. We are here to tell the truth to fallen mankind and witness to the reality of the temporary nature of this present space-time universe. The psalmist wants to see all the commandments that will assist him to live as he should and serve as he must in light of this great truth.

APPLICATION

Lord give us a breakthrough in understanding regarding the temporary nature of this space-time universe, and the centrality of eternity in our mission here. Give us a focus on eternity and the faith to walk through the problems that come to us in space and time. Lord teach us, through the Holy Spirit, all that we need to learn to serve powerfully in this world and minister truth fully and completely to all who will hear it.

Psalm 119:20

“My soul breaketh for the longing [that it hath] unto thy judgments at all times.”

REFLECTION

The Psalmist here expressed his passionate desire for increasing intimacy with the things of God, and his increasing separation from the things of this world that will distract him from his godly service. He so longs for deeper awareness of God’s Law that he aches within at times for increasing knowledge of the Lord. It is not academic knowledge he seeks but a deep wisdom in his soul and spirit that makes him alive to the truth. Psalm 42:1, 65:1, 84:2. He wants faith that works out in life, not knowledge that is barren of benefit to others. James 2:14-26.

At all times in the day he is aware of the deepest desire of his soul being intimacy with the Lord his God. It is this passionate faith that the Lord seeks of us. If we seek true, positive, and useful “heart breaking emotion” then let us open ourselves to the ministries of the Holy Spirit and let our love for Jesus grow and develop to this level of passionate desire to worship and serve. To know more of his will is to love him more. If we are learning more about Jesus and yet are not growing in passionate love for Jesus something is wrong with our learning. If we love Him we desire every word he speaks and we desire every moment in his fellowship. This is the reality of Holy Spirit filled living.

John 15:11-17

“11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

16 *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*
 17 *These things I command you, that ye love one another."*

APPLICATION

Build your passion for the Lord's fellowship believer. A believer without passionate love for the Lord Jesus is a contradiction in terms – in fact they are a hypocrite; a play actor at faith. Genuine faith is always whole hearted faith. The devils tremble at the truth, deceived unbelievers yawn at the truth, but the genuine believer worships aloud at the truth and praises God with all their heart, mind and body. Be abandoned in worship and rejoice in the Lord, or face the sin and slackness that stops this happening. Life is just too short to waste in slackness towards the things of God.

Psalm 119:21

"Thou hast rebuked the proud [that are] cursed, which do err from thy commandments."

REFLECTION

Those who **err** – *shagah* or *go astray* from God's word do so always because they are **proud** – *zed, arrogant, insolent, presumptuous*, and they are **cursed** because they come under God's rightful **rebuke** - *ga'ar, reprimand, censure*. Do not accuse God of being unfair in this verse, for the context of previous verses has given us the truth that is expressed here also. Those who reject the truth about God reject their creator and saviour. For a creature to reject its creator is supreme stupidity or arrogance, but either way it is culpable if the person is not intellectually disabled or too young to know the truth and act upon it. There is only one choice for man; blessing with God's Plan, or cursing eternally under the rebellious path of rejection of God's Plan for mankind.

In regard to the deliberate unbeliever, John 3:18 makes the statement that "... *He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God*". The central issue for all who are born into this world is what will they do with the reality of the incarnation and the terrible price paid for their salvation by their Saviour and Lord. For all who reject the Lord, despising his person and work, there is no hope for them. If there is only one hope and you walk away from that, there is no hope for you at all. To be under a curse of God does not mean you have been unfairly "cursed" by God, but that you have been offered two paths to walk, blessing and cursing, and you have chosen cursing! Deuteronomy 28:1-19.

Hebrews 10:26-31

26 *For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,*
 27 *But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.*
 28 *He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:*
 29 *Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?*
 30 *For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.*
 31 *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."*

God's call to man is the call to "choose life", but many "**err**" and choose death and cursing because they will not take the orders of their creator and saviour. When man "wanders off the path" of God, and rejects the authority of God's commandments over them, they have chosen cursing and judgment, rather than blessing and eternal rewards. It is likely the passage below that the psalmist thinks of as he pens this verse before us. It is a passage that specifically speaks of the Exile as the result/consequence of rebellion.

Deuteronomy 30:11-16

11 *For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.*
 12 *It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?*
 13 *Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?*
 14 *But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.*
 15 *See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;"*

APPLICATION

What will it be for us in this life? Will we choose life, or wander off after our own imaginings and discover only judgment and death? God's call to all mankind is to "choose life", and so let us affirm this truth today and seek the worship and service of the Lord our God.

Psalm 119:22

“Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies.”

REFLECTION

The Psalmist desires the Lord to **remove** – *galal, to roll away* the reproaches and the scorn and contempt that many express openly towards him. This prayer is most powerful when we see the psalm as coming from the march to Babylon by the Exiles, for the Babylonians despised these captives. Defeated enemies were despised, scorned, and treated as commodities with utmost contempt. The psalmist has “kept the principles of the Word of God”, and is baffled at why he is the victim of this great evil. It is only over time that the amazing answer to this prayer is seen.

Hundreds of thousands have already died in the earlier Egyptian and later Babylonian invasions of the land and a pitiful few are taken into captivity. 2 Kings 24:12-16. Around 10-20,000 princes, army officers, smiths, and artisans, with their families, were taken into captivity in 605 and 597 BC. They felt that they had been judged to be taken into captivity, and yet they were the “lucky ones” who would rebuild the nation from their gene pool. The Babylonians despised them, for they were the leaders of their community and had supported their stupid king in his rebellion, but the despising would turn to respect over time as they all saw what God did with them through their captivity.

When the Jewish people emerge from Babylonian Captivity it is with honour and wealth, and they return to the land as the smartest group of people ever on the planet. 2 Chronicles 35:20 – Ezra 1:1ff. The way the Lord will answer the psalmist’s prayer is amazing, for it will be through the captivity that this nation is transformed. Only the smartest of the people and their families were taken into captivity. It was the top of the intellectual bell curve of this nation that was taken to Babylon, the rest were killed in the battles and died in the land. The breeding gene pool of the Jews was a totally different one to all other nations from this point onwards, for only the top end had survived. This is why the Jews have provided more Nobel Prize winners than any other people group, and why they lead the world, even today, in educational achievement. God truly “rolled away” all reproach!

Unbelievers generally rejoice in any distress that comes upon believers who have annoyed them previously by preaching the truth to them. Satan’s people delight in mischief and evil days when they come upon the people of God, but their mockery can be faced with the prayer above, and the believer can have the assurance that their prayer is heard and that they will be delivered. Deliverance is often in a way we haven’t thought of, but which brings maximum glory to God. When we pray for deliverance, as the psalmist does here, we must set our hearts and minds to see and rejoice in the deliverance when it comes, and be ready to be surprised at the wonder of God’s work. Psalm 39:7-8, 42:10-11, 68:9-11, 19-20, 1 Peter 2:20, 3:15-17, 4:14-16.

Jeremiah had a different path to walk through this time of rebellion to his peers. He was the prophet to the people in the midst and had to stay behind, while other leaders were carried off. He kept preaching the truth and the result was he was arrested and treated badly by the evil Jewish king Zedekiah, but God ensured he had his “reproach” rolled away by the very people who capture the city, and God arranges it that an enemy officer, who is a believer, encourages the old prophet.

Jeremiah 39:15 – 40:4.

*15 Now the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, while he was shut up in the court of the prison, saying,
16 Go and speak to Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring my words upon this city for evil, and not for good; and they shall be accomplished in that day before thee.
17 But I will deliver thee in that day, saith the LORD: and thou shalt not be given into the hand of the men of whom thou art afraid.*

18 For I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee: because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the LORD.

CHAPTER 40

1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, after that Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he had taken him being bound in chains among all that were carried away captive of Jerusalem and Judah, which were carried away captive unto Babylon.

2 And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah, and said unto him, The LORD thy God hath pronounced this evil upon this place.

3 Now the LORD hath brought it, and done according as he hath said: because ye have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed his voice, therefore this thing is come upon you.

4 And now, behold, I loose thee this day from the chains which were upon thine hand. If it seem good unto thee to come with me into Babylon, come; and I will look well unto thee: but if it seem ill unto thee to come with me into Babylon, forbear: behold, all the land is before thee: whither it seemeth good and convenient for thee to go, thither go.”

‘I have kept thy testimonies’ is a declaration of faith that all who would know the deliverance of the Lord must be able to say aloud. This is not a boast of perfectionism but a strong statement of love, respect and devotion to God’s Word. It is the declaration of faith that we must all make in the presence of the enemies of truth. If we seek sanity in the midst of what many feel are insane times, we must find it in our devotion to the Word of God. God’s truth alone stabilizes

us in the midst of adversity, and only as we rest upon the promises of the Lord do we stand with Paul in Romans 8 and affirm the certainty of deliverance.

Romans 8:28-39

“28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

APPLICATION

Let us stand and affirm these truths today for the Lord is our deliverer, and he will roll away any reproach of evil men against us. Let us affirm the Plan of God above the power of the malice of evil men and demonic forces. Greater is He that is with us than he that is in the world. 1 John 4:4.

Psalm 119:23

“Princes also did sit [and] speak against me: [but] thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.”

REFLECTION

Some amongst the princes and leaders stayed behind in the land to serve under the evil last king Zedekiah, and as the captives were marched off these fools felt they were the lucky ones and mocked their fellows heading to captivity, while they stayed behind as the new elite, as the “rulers”. As the captives stood in chains, these new rulers sat in recently acquired splendour and pronounced judgments upon these slaves. God would reverse their fortunes within ten years, but at the time it looked as if those left behind were the winners, and those marching into captivity were the losers. How can such things be handled when they occur to us? Only by meditating upon the truths of the Word of God.

‘Thy servant did meditate in thy statutes’: To counteract the reproaches of those who mocked them, the psalmist **meditates** upon God’s word for comfort and assurance. We are not at the mercy of men’s opinions of us, for God’s opinion alone matters to the believer. Jesus warns us that we will receive hatred from the world, just as he did, but that he has “overcome this world and its evil prince”. John 15:18-19, 1 John 2:15-17. The Lord also asks the disciples to consider the difference between those who gain the “world” and yet lose their eternal soul. Matthew 16:26. Who has really gained; the believer or the mocking pagan?

APPLICATION

Let us leave our case for vindication in the Lord’s hands, for he alone will deliver us in mighty power.

Psalm 119:24

“Thy testimonies also [are] my delight [and] my counsellors.”

REFLECTION

When we walk with God his Word is our greatest **delight** - *sha’shua* - *enjoyment* and *pleasure*. The study of God’s word is our joy, in a manner of speaking it can be our ‘hobby’, for to study it is to rejoice in joy at what God says and does for us. While those who are rebuked by the Lord have no delight in the Word of God, Jeremiah 6:10, we rejoice in the Lord and find in obedience the pathway to blessing now and evermore.

The Word is our delight, and the authors of it become our friends as we share their heart through their Holy Spirit inspired words. **Counsellors** – from *etsah*, to give *guidance* and *advice* (Psalm 19:8, Psalm 43:3, Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 6:23). We have no need of any human counsellors when we fellowship deeply, in the filling of the Holy Spirit, with the words of scripture, for the Word is our counsel and the Holy Spirit our counsellor. My “tent making” earthly business is counselling, but my work, when it is done well, is always bringing people into conformity with the Word of God. There is no good counsel that ever violates the Word of God and when God’s path is rejected all man gets is fear.

APPLICATION

God’s Word is to be our counsel. Fellowship with the human authors through their words is to be the sweetest fellowship we know, and their Holy Spirit inspired truths are to be our guide for life and blessing. Let us make the study of the Word of God our “hobby”, not adopt some time wasting activity as a Hobby.

Notes

DOCTRINES

PILGRIM

JUDGEMENT: CURSE

JUDGMENT: FOUR GENERATION CURSE

SECTION FOUR (DALETH)

Psalm 119:25

“My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.”

REFLECTION

The psalmist cries out here in greatest distress again. This verse is a significant encouragement to me as I face great pressure in my housing situation. I have faced the greatest malice ever in my life over the last nine years of pressure in our home facing the daily threat of eviction with fourteen days notice if I fall behind on rental payments for the land. We are caught, unable to sell, given the open malice of the trustees of the land, and unable to move, without losing everything we have ever had. It is only as I write this book that I see clearly why the Lord has kept me here through this time, for without this awful experience I would not have known the heart of our human author of this Psalm.

The Lord’s words to us have been, “Stand, Serve, and Wait upon the Lord for Deliverance.” This message has been consistent from the Lord, and like the Psalmist in the past verses we have sang at many times of God’s gracious deliverance in small matters, and with the certainty of his deliverance over this greater matter of our future. Like Abraham and our psalmist however, we face at times the “horror of great darkness” sweeping over our soul. Genesis 15:12. At times when fear and anguish at the pressure sweeps over our soul we feel the psalmist’s emotion and our soul clings to the dust! Our promises = Psalm 16:1, 18:1-3, 27:14, Isaiah 12:3, 26:3, Jeremiah 17:18.

‘My soul’: *Nephesh* is the Hebrew word for the immaterial part of man that forms our human-ness, our being as an individual person. Our very essence is crushed by pressure and **cleaves** to the dust. The word **cleave** – *dabaq* to *cling*, to be *glued* to, is a powerful way of speaking of our deepest awareness of our nature as fallen, fragile and weak creatures of “dust”. The great forgiveness Psalm reminds us that the maker “knows we are but dust”. Psalm 103:10-18. In times of great pressure we all are painfully aware of this reality ourselves, and we need to just “sit with” that truth.

Today and every day of our short life we face this same battle, and with the Apostle Paul we face the challenge to “put off” our fears, worries, unbelief and doubts, and “put on” the reality of faith like strong armour to keep our head and heart safe from the enemy’s attacks. Philippians 3:8-17, Colossians 3:8-15. We are urged in our prayers and bible study to put on “*the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*” (Ephesians 4:22-25).

It is no accident that the Colossians passage ends with the exhortation to allow the Word of God free reign within the soul. **Colossians 3:8-17**

“8 But now ye also **put off** all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

12 **Put on** therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

16 **Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly** in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”

‘**Quicken thou me according to thy word**’: **Quicken** – *chayah*, make me alive, or revive in me a right spirit. The psalmist pleads for a resuscitation of genuine spiritual life within him, so that he is restored from doubt and fear to life and health; to a right way of thinking and doing. This will always occur when we open ourselves to the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit through the Word. Revival is always “**According to thy word**” – it will always be accomplished by the prayerful Holy Spirit filled study of, belief in, and obedience to God’s Word.

APPLICATION

Be encouraged when you fall into despair at times, for you are in good company. Continue in that company by remaining on your knees in prayer until you are restored in spirit, and then rise up to feed upon the living Word of God and so refresh your soul and spirit for service again. Worship restores the spirit and readies us for service again.

Psalm 119:26

“I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes.”

REFLECTION

‘I have declared my ways’: To **declare** – *saphar*, is to *mark off*, to *inscribe*, to *enumerate* and it depicts a careful assessment of **my ways**. The psalmist is confessing some sin here, and he is confessing it in exactly the same way we are told to, by “citing the case” against us and coming before the Lord in humility and honesty. Psalm 32:5, 38:18, 51:1ff, 86:5. From the context of the previous verse it may be my sin at times, the sin of unbelief and doubt.

Confession of sin as 1 John 1:9 so clearly states, tell us bluntly that, “*If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*”. We come to God with honest confrontation of the truth about our behaviours and attitudes that have led to our conviction, and the Lord deals with whatever we bring before Him in grace, mercy and love. Psalm 103:10-18. God is gracious and forgiving, and many do not recall the Old Testament examples of this.

2 Chronicles 7:14

“12 And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice.

13 If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;

14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

Lamentations 3:22-26.

“22 It is of the LORD’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

23 They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.

24 The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

25 The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.

26 It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.”

God's mercy and grace surround us on every side, (Psalms 32:10, 71:21) and there is nothing that can separate us from his love (Romans 8:28-39). God hears our every word and he responds in grace the very moment we call upon his mercy. We can always be assured that we are **heard** - *'anah, taken heed, paid attention* to our confession. The Psalmist is assured that his prayer for forgiveness is heard and answered with forgiveness. We are heard by the one who went to the Cross for our sins, and we are heard as his children, not as dirty beggars.

Isaiah 40:21ff

"21 Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?

22 It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:

23 That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.

24 Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.

25 To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.

26 Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.

27 Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?

28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.

29 He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

"Teach me thy statutes". This is the psalmist's consistent request, for he knows it is only God's Word that enables him to survive the things he faces and prosper in the way. He knows that no matter how much he understands, there is always more to learn, and more that will assist his stability as he walks through such great pressures. 2 Peter 3:18.

APPLICATION

Let us keep short accounts with God, dealing with any sins that crop up into our mind as needing confession. Let us face our sins quickly and eliminate anything that slows our spiritual walk down. Let us accept our weakness, and affirm and worship the Lord for his acceptance of us in our weaknesses.

Psalm 119:27

"Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works."

REFLECTION

The psalmist asks for **understanding** – *biyn, discernment, insight and judgment*. There is a difference between the knowledge of facts and the deep comprehension of the importance and application of those facts. In the Greek language they spoke of knowing about (gnosis), deeply knowing (epignosis), and then finally wisdom (Sophia). The psalmist wants to advance into deeper knowledge of biblical truth, that over time in its application into life, he might become wise in the things of God. It is only as we truly live out the reality of doctrinal truth that we fully know it.

Psalm 71:14-18

"14 But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.

15 My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof.

16 I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.

17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.

18 Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come."

Talk – *siyach* means to *put forth, to commune or to meditate* and could refer to worship, praise or witness/testimony. It is only as we have lived out the truth that we can share it meaningfully, communicating to others the **wondrous works** – *pala, marvellous, wonderful, surpassing, extraordinary* things of the LORD. *Pala* is the word for the superlative, showing that the deeper our understanding of God's ways, the more **wondrous** they become in our sight. As we grow spiritually through application of the Word into daily life, so we grow in appreciation of the things of God, and our worship goes even deeper into praise and glory. Genuine spiritual growth always leads to more powerful worship.

APPLICATION

The more we know of the things of God the more we will worship and witness. Worship and witnessing are by-products of spiritual life. We cannot be silenced, we must praise God for all his goodness and honour Him for all his grace towards us. Let us ensure that our hunger for the Lord grows daily, and let us feed that with the Word.

Psalm 119:28

“My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word.”

REFLECTION

‘My soul melteth for heaviness’: This is debilitating sorrow, which can flow through our soul at times when we are smitten by the seriousness of our past sins and even by our present waves of worries and fears. It describes beautifully the physiological stress reaction in the body as the adrenal glands pump out the stress hormone Cortisol and it feels like the heart and stomach are melting within. This verse is another powerful reminder that we will get overwhelmed at times when overwhelming things happen. We will be crushed at times by crushing weights – tick the box of reality and pray.

The Lord will lift us up again, but we need to come before Him and seek his restoration. The depression that is created by the stress or worry or sin can only be lifted by Confession of Sin and feeding upon the Word again, so that the Holy Spirit can strengthen our weak knees again and help us to stand and serve again. Zechariah 10:12, Ephesians 3:16, Philipians 4:13, Hebrews 12:1-12). It is not wrong to be depressed, it is normal, but we don't stay there.

We can feel at times like the ship wrecked or sea-tossed sailor facing the terrors of the deep. There is a fear that grips the soul and body and holds you paralyzed by its anguish. The psalmist captures this and its remedy.

Psalm 107:23-31

*“23 They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;
24 These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep.
25 For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.
26 They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble.
27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end.
28 Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.
29 He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.
30 Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.
31 Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men.”*

APPLICATION

Only the healing power of the Holy Spirit upon the Word of God can lift us up to serve and worship the Lord again. No matter how bad we feel about our doubts, worry, fears or sins, if we bring them before the Lord they can be forgiven and we can be restored to service and worship. Let us seek such restoration. Let us seek the Lord's healing balm to our stress and depression – for in this present world there is much to be depressed about. We will feel these things but we don't stay there we come before the Lord in Holy Spirit filled prayer and allow Him to lift us up.

Psalm 119:29

“Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously.”

REFLECTION

‘Remove from me’: This is very blunt and honest admission by the psalmist. He confronts his Old Sin Nature weakness, and it is his lying behaviours. He has had a habit of lying to others and to God and he confronts this and seeks to have his life turned around by God's power, with a new path being walked avoiding these sins of the tongue. We all have besetting sins that are easy for us to fall into, but they are to be fought against, not rolled over before.

The psalmist takes personal responsibility for walking this “lying way” in his life and seeks the Lord's power to resist and flee from this evil life pattern. James urges believers to “Resist the devil and he will Flee from you.” James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:9. We must actively reject and resist sin and evil and avoid areas of life that lead us into trouble. I have just spent time with a person in counselling whose trouble stemmed from walking back into company that they had escaped ten years before, but after five days with the old friends again all their old sinful patterns re-emerged in power. We must

turn aside from the paths that tempt us, resisting their allure, and pray for strength as we set our emotions, our thinking, and our body in a different direction. Bad paths lead to bad actions. Hebrews 12:12-13.

'Grant me thy law graciously': The Psalmist seeks the whole **law –torah**, and this means all the statutes and precepts recorded by Moses. He wants the blessing of Moses, not the judgments Moses pronounced and so he seeks the truth as his guide and the power to stand against sinful temptations. **Graciously** – *chanan* means to *bend* or *stoop in kindness* to an inferior; to *favour* or to *bestow* something undeserved. He seeks God's gracious help to achieve this.

We may paraphrase this verse - "Keep me from the folly of self-deception O Lord, and in grace grant to me a life transforming understanding of your word."

Psalm 141:1-4

*"1 Lord, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.
2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.
3 Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.
4 Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties."*

APPLICATION

Let us face our Old Sin Nature sinful habits and bring them before the Lord our God in confession. Let us also embrace the Law of the Lord, for in his standards we find strength to stand against the temptations of the evil one.

Psalm 119:30

"I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid [before me]."

REFLECTION

'I have chosen the way of truth': The Psalmist has made a settled decision to follow a life based upon the truth of God's Word. There is a need for us all to sit with the holy demands of God upon our life and make a conscious decision to select truth and holiness as our life style. We speak of sin being a "life style", and truthfulness is equally able to be spoken of as a "lifestyle choice".

The word for **truth** – *emunah* has its roots in the absolute stable truthfulness of God, for its basic meaning is *firmness, stability, steadfastness* all of which show trustworthiness. God's truth is revealed to us in the inspired writings of Scripture. The psalmist affirms the centrality of the Word of God for his life and health.

'Have I laid' [before me]: Laid – shavah is to *agree with, or become like*. He has laid out the truths of scripture before his eyes and made them his own. He has allowed the Word to become his standard, and the words of scripture the words of his thinking processes.

Deuteronomy 11:18-23

*"18 Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.
19 And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.
20 And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates:
21 That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.
22 For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him;
23 Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves."*

APPLICATION

Let us make the words of God our words, and the Word of God our closest possession. Let us choose God's path alone through this world and then we shall be walking the path of power and light.

Psalm 119:31

“I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O LORD, put me not to shame.”

REFLECTION

‘I have stuck’: *Stuck* - *dabaq* is the same word ‘*cleave*’, used in vs.25. We cling to the truths of God’s Word and we keep our mind stable and safe as a result. We desire to “cling like glue” to the principles of God’s Word, for in the closeness of our attachment to truth is our strength and power to walk through this world. The doctrines of the Word of God keep us safe in the angelic conflict, for truth garrisons the soul against the temptations to dangerous and even fatal decisions.

John 8:31-32

“31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

2 Corinthians 10:3-5.

“3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;”

‘O LORD, put me not to shame’: His cry is heart felt, and a desire for us all to copy. What do we fear in this life? The psalmist feared making his Lord and God look foolish on account of his own poor decisions. He feared being an embarrassment to his God. This is the challenge that we need to hear and take up – to live worthy of our high calling and not be an embarrassment to our God. Ephesians 4:1, Colossians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 2:12, 2 Thessalonians 1:5-11.

APPLICATION

Let us stick like glue to the Word of God and allow the Holy Spirit, through the engrafted word in our heart to save us from moral disasters.

Psalm 119:32

“I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.”

REFLECTION

‘I will run’: This is the sentiment of the mature believer who will no longer travel through life with the slow stumbling steps of weakness and despondency but is strong in the Lord and in His Holy Word. He will now **run – runs**, he will lift his feet to spring with gladness, without hesitation or weakness, along the well trodden path prescribed by the Holy Commandments. Isaiah 40:30-31.

The Psalmist knows that he is committing himself to the athlete’s life – a life where he must exercise self discipline to be the successful “runner” he seeks to be. We speak of a runner having a “big heart”, and by this we mean, he has great stamina to run the races well and consistently powerfully. This is the meaning of the phrase **‘when thou shalt enlarge my heart’:** – *leb*, when you expand my understanding and my assurance of thy truth. It means the building of incredible capacity for life and service through walking closely with God’s Word.

1 Corinthians 9:24-29

“24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. 25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: 27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

APPLICATION

Let us be athletes in our life style – determined, self controlled, focused on the finishing tape of eternal life, and seeking only the prize that the Lord our God and Saviour has for us. Let us build our capacity for life by feeding on the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit and worship and serve in such a way that builds a “big hearted faith”.

DOCTRINES:

SECTION FIVE (HE)

Psalm 119:33.

“Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it [unto] the end.”

REFLECTION

‘Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes’: **Teach** – *yarah* is to *point the way*, to give *direction*, to *teach*, and when combined with **the way** – *derek*, the pathway of **thy statutes**. Literally - “Direct me, O LORD along the pathway of your Word”. The psalmist seeks a straight path for his feet, a clear direction to advance in, and he desires to learn the habits that will help his advance as he moves along. He wants to learn the “way of the Word” so living in a biblical manner becomes his true nature. Romans 12:1-2.

‘I shall keep it [unto] the end’: **Keep** – *natsar*, is to guard, to watch over, and this the Psalmist is determined to do. He has set his guard over the words of scripture in his heart so that they are always remembered and he works to make sure they are remembered. He is determined to live this way until the very end of this life and entry into the next.

End – *eqeb*, speaks of *consequence* and is predominantly translated *because* (i.e. the end result being). It is also translated *reward* (i.e. the *end result* of excellence) and is translated **‘unto] the end’** twice, here and in Psalm 119:112. The true end of the believer’s life is the reception of our eternal rewards of heaven, and so it is this end (heaven), rather than death that I believe is in view here. Death is not the end, for we do not see death, we see Jesus. John 8:51, 58.

APPLICATION

Let us focus like runners. The runner does not focus on the tape, but on a point just beyond the finishing tape, otherwise he slows in the last paces. Also the boxer who floors their opponent does not focus on the point where they will hit their opponent, but on a point an inch beyond the point of contact, so that the full blow hits the target, with nothing held back. Let us live, holding back nothing from our efforts each day.

Psalm 119:34

“Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with [my] whole heart.”

REFLECTION

‘Give me understanding’: The verb **understanding** – *biyn*, *discernment*, *understanding* or *consideration* is written in the causative, to cause to understand, to give understanding, to teach. This is my cry to the Lord in my present distress; that I might understand what is happening to me and that I might discern his path through the impossible situation I face. I do not seek the understanding of man, but the discernment of the spiritual realities behind the situation that I might make decisions based on eternal life realities, not just the threat and pressures of time. The psalmist is not saying that he will “keep the law” after he has understanding, but that the two things might go together.

In Psalm 111:10 the Psalmist notes that, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. A good understanding have all they that do his commandments. His praise endures forever.” The Proverb writer repeats these points. Proverbs 1:7, 2:1-6, 3:1-8. In the midst of his worst days Job understood this also. “And unto man he said, ‘Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.” Job 28:28. It is active life changing understanding that I seek, and in my distress I see the distress of the Psalmist and I see the same solution = active obedience to all the commands of God I know right now, well before I receive full understanding of my situation.

I must do righteousness and keep the Commands of the Lord Jesus. John 15:7-17. His commands are not grievous. 1 John 5:3. This is the biblical practise of faith-rest; it is our stepping out into obedience and worship well ahead of full understanding of what we are doing, or even what we are believing and saying aloud in our prayers and praise. It is in our obedient actions, and in the midst of worship that understanding of our situation comes.

‘I shall keep... I shall observe...’: both these words *natsar* and *shamar* have the same meaning i.e. to guard, watch over, to protect, to attend to. With every part of his being (whole heart) the psalmist will throw himself into obedience to the Law of God. This whole hearted worship and service is what we are called to if we would discover true understanding/wisdom in this life. The path to understanding and wisdom is the path of worship, service and righteous actions. It is as we step out and live our faith that our faith catches fire and illuminates the path ahead. John 7:17, James 1:5, 3:13-18. This is a work of the Holy Spirit, not a work of our human strength.

Without understanding we lack the mental and emotional strength to do anything, but as we commit to obey the Word and worship the Lord, the Holy Spirit fills us up and provides all we need to advance in service and as we see God’s working through our lives, so we learn more of Him and his work – we gain the understanding we sought.

APPLICATION

Let our prayer be, "Lord thank you that you give us your strength, through the Holy Spirit, to advance in our understanding of you and your path for us, as we commit to being obedient to your Word. Build our faith Lord in our obedient service and worship".

Psalm 119:35

"Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight."

REFLECTION

Darak means to *tread*, to *walk* and it is in the causative; therefore it becomes a request, i.e. *cause* or *make* me to tread the '**path of thy commandments**'. The Psalmist recognizes in this request that he needs the help of the Holy Spirit as he advances in obedience. Unless the power of God the Holy Spirit enlivens his spirit as he advances he will splutter and stop, like a car without petrol. He also recognizes again that the path of obedience is indeed a well trodden path, and that he needs to walk just as his godly ancestors walked.

This walk along the well trodden path of dogged obedience to the Word of God is what others call the "Faith-Rest Life" – as faith is dynamically expressed in obedience, and the believer rests in the provision of God for them as they advance. While the first step of this path is at times a hard and pain filled one, with doubts and fears rushing through the mind as the first steps are made, these arrows of the enemy soon dissipate. As we advance in the filling of the Holy Spirit God fills up the vacuum of fear and doubt with joy and deep delight. Psalm 1:2, 37:4.

This is also the outworking of what the reformers called "The Perseverance of the Saints". This doctrine is not the hard nosed and heard hearted legalistic thing that some old Calvinists tried to live. It is the walk in the filling of the Holy Spirit, whereby the delight in God's path grows as we advance through our fears, doubts, and worries, into a place of worship and delight in the Lord. Paul's journey is caught in Romans 7:22ff. The psalmist seeks the outworking of grace through obedient walking and worship – he is not seeking hard faced legalism but passionate faith-rest with Jesus.

Note the biblical meaning of the perseverance of the saints below. It is the doctrine that catches the mental attitude of the tired and depressed saint, who sets his/her heart and mind to walk with God and through the walk build their strength in the spirit.

PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

"Their certain continuance in a state of grace". Once justified and regenerated, the believer can neither totally nor finally fall away from grace, but will certainly persevere (*continue*) therein and attain everlasting life. They may be carnal at times, but confession restores power. Carnality does not remove assurance of eternity, just the enjoyment of it now.

This doctrine is clearly taught in these passages, (John 10:28, John 10:29; Romans 11:29; Philippians 1:6, 1 Peter 1:5). It, moreover, follows from a consideration of: -

- (1.) The immutability of the divine decrees (Jeremiah 31:3, Matthew 24:22-24, Acts 13:48, Romans 8:30);
- (2.) The provisions of the covenant of grace (Jeremiah 32:40, John 10:29, John 17:2-6);
- (3.) The atonement and intercession of Christ (Isaiah 53:6, Isaiah 53:11, Matthew 20:28, 1Peter 2:24, John 11:42, John 17:11, John 17:15, John 17:20; Romans 8:34);
- (4.) The indwelling of the Holy Ghost (John 14:16, 2Corinthians 1:21, 2Corinthians 1:22, 2 Corinthians 5:5, Ephesians 1:14, 1 John 3:9)." (Quoted in full from Easton's Bible Dictionary).

APPLICATION

Lord, give us your strength, as we advance through our deepest anguish of soul, to the place of delight of spirit, through the indwelling ministries of the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 119:36

"Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness."

REFLECTION

'**Incline my heart**': **Incline** – *natah turn, influence* or *prompt* me toward your word. The psalmist opens himself to the ministry of the Holy Spirit within. He is ready to be moulded and worked upon by the Spirit, so that his desires, and attitudes are brought into conformity with the mind of Christ Jesus. Romans 8:29, 12:1-2. He is ready to be clay in the potter's hands.

Jeremiah 18:1-10

*1 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,
 2 Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.
 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.
 4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.
 5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,
 6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.
 7 At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it;
 8 If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.
 9 And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it;
 10 If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them."*

Covetousness – *betsa'* is profit gained from an inordinate desire for this world's goods. We are either giving ourselves over to the Lord as clay to the potter, or we are trying to gather goods around us as if things matter! We are either looking to use every thing we have, and every moment we have here, for God's glory or the things we have will control us. The saddest words of Paul's as he faced his coming execution for his faith were expressed towards the betrayal of Demas. This man had left him, "having loved the things of this world". 2 Timothy 4:10. How sad that a man would walk away from eternal things so close to the death of Paul. Even though the temptations are always there we are called to stand in truth to the end and rejoice in testing. James 1:2-5.

APPLICATION

Lord, today I commit to be the clay for you to mould. Make me the person I can be as I open myself to the ministries of the Holy Spirit and allow your work to transform my worship and so transform my life.

Lord let me value your path ahead of any things I temporarily own on that path.

Psalm 119:37

"Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; [and] quicken thou me in thy way."

REFLECTION

The psalmist seeks further work of the Holy Spirit into his soul. This man has faced his fears, and now he faces his great temptation to desire the things of this world ahead of the path of God for his life. The word **vanity** = *falsehood, idolatry and pretence*. It carries with it the idea of pointlessness and finally powerlessness. It means to make an idol of a thing and follow after it as if it is temporary, when it is but for a moment of time. All things are but for a moment of time. We are urged to "redeem/buy up the time" we have for righteous actions, not waste time pursuing material goods that time erodes! 1 Corinthians 7:29. Too many believers waste time filling space with useless objects!

Matthew 6:19-21

*19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:
 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:
 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."*

Ephesians 5:15-18

*15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,
 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
 17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.
 18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;"*

The psalmist has appealed for Holy Spirit strength to resist evil, and now asks for power to become alive to truth and righteousness. The word translated **quicken** = *chayah, made alive* to God's **way**; a course of action or manner of life that illustrates God's recorded will. The psalmist recognizes in his request that he needs the power of God to achieve his goal here. He seeks the strength that will come as he steps out in faith, and turns away from the temptations to follow after materialism.

Keep remembering that this psalm was sung by the exiles as they trudged into Babylonian Captivity, and that it was written on the way to exile over the month or more of the march. They wrote and sang these things as they broke

through in their understanding of why they were there in chains, and not in blessing in the land of Judah. It is in this context of suffering that they see that materialism and its associated idolatry has destroyed their people, and only the work of the Holy Spirit will enliven the path of God to those who have been deceived by things so long.

1 John 2:15-17

“15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, [see that ye] love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever”. 1 Peter 1:22-23.

APPLICATION

Lord let us resist the temptations of advertising and media to be pre-occupied in this life with the things that do not last, and Lord please enliven us through your Holy Spirit to the spiritual path that leads into eternity and blessing.

Psalm 119:38

“Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who [is devoted] to thy fear.”

REFLECTION

Establish – *qum*, is to rise in the sense of standing erect, and possibly also has the sense of *strengthen* as in Psalm 119:28, and *established* (confirmed) as in Deuteronomy 19:15. The psalmist reminds us again and again in the twenty two sections of this Psalm that the “fear of the Lord is the beginning of the path that leads to true wisdom”. God strengthens and stabilizes our mind as we adopt the correct attitude towards the Lord, and that attitude is worship.

2 Corinthians 1:20-22

“20 For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God;

22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”

We see this same “attitude of gratitude” when David faces the full implications of the Lord promise to him of making a house from him that will be greater than any temple. God has just told him that he is not to build the temple in Jerusalem, but his son will, but the greatest building will be done by God and it will last forever. 2 Samuel 7:8-16. We now see fully what God meant, and in our union with Jesus we understand and rejoice, but David grasped the wonder of it and rejoiced well before the full reality was revealed. This is the attitude God is looking for. Hear David’s words and see his heart in them.

2 Samuel 7:17-24

“18 Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who am I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?

19 And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord GOD; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant’s house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD?

20 And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord GOD, knowest thy servant.

21 For thy word’s sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them.

22 Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

23 And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?

24 For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God.

25 And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said.

26 And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee.

27 For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.

28 And now, O Lord GOD, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant:

29 Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord GOD, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever."

We are the LORD's **servants** - *'ebed*, those *bonded to him in servitude*, and yet the "servitude" is a service rendered in the greatest atmosphere of love, for we serve the one who has given all that is of value to us. Like Thomas when we see the risen Jesus in spirit and in truth, we do not say, "Hi Jesus", but we bow before him and say, "My Lord and my God". John 20:28. We are sons and daughters of the Lord, in our obedience to his words, John 15:14, but in respectful awe we worship him, we do not get cute and folksy with Him, for he is our Lord and our God. Psalm 103:11, 145:19, 147:11.

The **fear of the Lord** - *reverential awe* of the LORD. There is a casual spirit in many churches today, where holy reverence is lost and people are so full of joy that they become disrespectful towards the one who went to the Cross for them. When we lose holy awe we have lost the spirit that transformed the world in the first century. Let us hear the Word of God and heed the examples of our fathers in faith, for they impressed the world by their courage and dignity, not by their "nuttery"! We have too many people in our churches today claiming to know Jesus, who act like clowns, and there is no place for that in scripture, and that is not what we see with David, with Peter, with John or Paul.

It was not a "bliss bunny" faith that changed the evil Roman Empire, it was the strong faith of women and men who calmly and with courage that impressed the pagans went to their deaths in the arena. The "fear of the Lord" is the holy awe at what He has done, is doing, and will do. The biblical "fear of the Lord" is not servile fear, but the awesomeness of love towards the one who is your God and yet loves you with unchangeable love. Jeremiah 32:39-41, 1 John 1:9.

APPLICATION

Reverence and holy service is the fruit of genuine relationship with Jesus as Saviour and Lord. Those who are casual and almost disrespectful with the Lord may be forgiven if they are children, young in faith, or mentally retarded, but no believer who has walked with Jesus for long is anything other than reverential before their Lord and God. Let us stand, or bow like David and all the saints of all ages and worship our God and King.

Psalm 119:39

"Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments [are] good."

REFLECTION

'Turn away my reproach': What should we dread and fear? The bible is clear on that point. There is not servile fear in love, for perfect love casts out all fear that debilitates. The "fear of the Lord" that we have seen above is a purifying awe/respect for the Lord, not any knee shaking fear that debilitates. The only thing we need to fear is falling short of the glory that the Lord has for us in this life and eternity. Hebrews 4:1-12. We will dread being a reproach to His Holy Name. We do not want to fail him on our path through this life. Psalm 39:8, 57:3, 1 Timothy 3:7, 5:14, Titus 2:8. Catch this spirit in John's First Letter and in Hebrews.

1 John 4:17-19

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

19 We love him, because he first loved us."

Hebrews 3:17 - 4:2

17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

4:1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."

The Israelites of the Exodus Generation failed to apply faith into their daily walk and so they missed the best that God had for them and all died in the wilderness years. Their children believed and applied the Word into daily life and

marched with Joshua into the land of promise. The writer to the Hebrew Christians urges his readers to be like that second generation and “fear” to be like the earlier one and miss out on the best that God has for them.

The Apostle John reminds us that we have a position of blessing in Christ Jesus and need to advance daily through worship into the best that he has for us. His grace, mercy and love has provided all that is good for us, and so in reverential awe we express our faith by grasping the outstretched hand of the Lord and advancing down his life path for us. The Lord “turns away our shame/embarrassment” and gives blessing when we advance in awesome faith and love.

‘For thy judgments [are] good’: God’s judgements are **good** – *tob, pleasant and agreeable*. The psalmist recognizes a principle here that we should pause and reflect long upon. If we are to receive any discipline in this life, let it be from the Lord, not from evil men. If we are to receive any truth, let it be from the source of the Lord, not the wisdom of men. God’s Word alone is good. All else is mixed in its contents and results, but the Word of God is always “good” for the body, soul and spirit.

Deuteronomy 4:1-9

“1 Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you.

2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

3 Your eyes have seen what the LORD did because of Baalpeor: for all the men that followed Baalpeor, the LORD thy God hath destroyed them from among you.

4 But ye that did cleave unto the LORD your God are alive every one of you this day.

5 Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it.

6 Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.

7 For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for?

8 And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?

9 Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;”

APPLICATION

Lord give us a holy fear of being foolish in the eyes of the world by our disobedience. Strengthen us through your Holy Word, that we might be vessels of honour and power to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalm 119:40

“Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.”

REFLECTION

‘Behold, I have longed after thy precepts’. The Psalmist’s passion to see the Word formed in him is caught by these words. He is like Paul in his letters, urging the believers to advance in the same Holy Spirit filled fervor that he knows, and worship and serve the Lord in power and glory. All his desire is focused upon the service of the Lord and the worship of his Holy Name. He sees in God’s Word his “mandate” for life and service, and he longs to make every precept of the Word alive within him and live them out in power in his daily life. Romans 7:24, Galatians 5:16-22, Philippians 3:13-14.

Quicken – *chayah, make alive* to righteousness. There is only physical life and spiritual life, and the Psalmist seeks the life of the Holy Spirit, not any power and energy that man can give, or he can work up himself within him. He longs for the Word to be alive within him and for the life of righteousness to be his life. Jesus promises all who enter into relationship with him life abounding, not just ordinary life. John 10:10. We were dead in sin and he “quicken us” in Holy Spirit power to become sons and daughters of God; to live in an extra-ordinary way. Ephesians 2:4-10. We are, when clothed in his righteousness, truly “his workmanship”, and the breastplate of righteousness is part of the armour of the Holy Spirit that is provided for all believers. Ephesians 6:10-18.

APPLICATION

Just as the Psalmist calls for the armour of the Holy Spirit to stand and serve the Lord, so we need to put our armour on each day. Let us daily and quite consciously go through the passage in Ephesians and put on our spiritual armour piece by piece, reminding ourselves that the battle this day "is the Lord's battle" and in Holy Spirit power we are more than conquerors through Christ who loves us and gave himself for us. Romans 8:37.

DOCTRINES:

REVELATION

CHRISTIAN LIFE – WALKING

SECTION SIX (VAU)

Psalm 119:41

"Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, [*even*] thy salvation, according to thy word."

REFLECTION

'**Mercies**', as seen in the word *chesed*, meaning *goodness, kindness, faithfulness*. This new section of the psalm begins with the re-affirmation of the basis of our holy faith, and that foundation is the holy and merciful character of God. It is not mercy according to our standards that we seek, but the holy and abundant mercies of Almighty God. We praise him that we come before a Throne of Grace and Mercy, not the judgment seat of sinners. Our sins are forgiven in Christ Jesus, and we rejoice in the bounty that is ours through his person and work.

Salvation is given to us as a grace gift, '**according to thy word**' – *imrah*, his *commandment, speech, word*. Ephesians 2:8-10. We are not saved according to the power of our faith, but the mercy of his grace! This section begins with the affirmation of grace and mercy, and keep in mind that this psalm most likely emerges from the so called "death march" to Babylon. The captives felt that their lives were over, and for many their expected lives of service were. Ezekiel was destined to be a priest, and yet his captivity ended that service, but another door would open in God's time and he would be one of the greatest of the prophets. Ezekiel 3:4-11.

God's faithfulness and mercy would continue to be seen, but now through their suffering and their slavery by the rivers of Babylon. The psalmist seeks the arrival of blessing in the midst of pressure, as the Lord's blessing will transform every situation and bring light into dark places. Psalm 106:4-5.

Psalm 69:13-18

"13 But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O LORD, in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation.

14 Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.

15 Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.

16 Hear me, O LORD; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.

17 And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily.

18 Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies."

Salvation - *teshu'ah, deliverance, safety and victory*. He seeks "salvation" from the Lord, and he leaves it over to the Lord as to how that deliverance will come. In my present distressing situation the Lord has shown me this truth. I daily seek the Lord's salvation/deliverance from my impossible situation, but he has shown me over recent years that he will deliver "his way" not my way, and I am now in a place where I accept that. Isaiah 55:7-9.

Our salvation has been established '**according to thy word**', in the promise (and its fulfilment) of a redeemer. It is deliverance in the company of Jesus that we seek, not any abstract deliverance that is separate from his walk alongside us, and ours with Him. It is always "according to your will Lord" that we pray, for anything received outside his will and purpose is useless and pointless. All that is of value is within his will for our life, and that is in the sphere of fellowship and service.

APPLICATION

Let us embrace the deliverance of the Lord and rejoice in it well before it is clearly seen by all around us.

Let us affirm with the Psalmist that we stand for the Lord's way alone for our life upon the earth, and we seek no other path than the path of the Holy Spirit and Jesus presence with us.

Psalm 119:42

“So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word.”

REFLECTION

Wherewith – *dabar*, means the action of *speaking* or that which is spoken, i.e. *speech* or *words* as it is translated at the end of this verse “for I trust in thy **word** - *dabar*”. As we rest in the path of the Lord for us, and faith-rest our spirit in the expectation of God’s deliverance, according to His Holy Word, so we rest indeed. We set our heart and mind to face the truth of God, not the lies of the enemy. We face the reality of our pressure cooker situation with the eyes of faith that see the Lord’s actions to resolve our situation, we are not pre-occupied with the fears and worries of the situation. These are not the words of a person in denial of reality, but the words of one who transforms their reality by dynamic faith in the power and plan of God for them. Hebrews 11:1. How will we see the tests of this life?

Reproach – *charaph*, is to *taunt*, *blaspheme*, *defy*, etc. We will be hated by those who have rejected the Lord’s claim over their life; we have the Lord’s promise about that in John 15:18-25. We have also the Lord’s comfort immediately after the warning about the hatred, that he will give us his Holy Spirit as our comforter in the midst of the malice filled situations we face. John 15:26-27. We will face great hatred of men, just as our Saviour faced man’s worst hatred. We are not to be dismayed for he has “overcome this world” and the “prince of this world is judged”. John 16:8-11, 33.

The phrase **‘So shall I have’** catches the reality of dynamic faith that steps out into the place where hatred is felt and states the truth of God in the face of the enemy. It is the assurance that the Lord will provide the answer to all malice, and it is to stand in the place where we are loved and let the malice of evil men melt in the light of that love. Psalm 42:10-11, 71:10-16, 109:25-26. The enemy will mock, we can expect them to, but the Lord will deliver, and we can expect Him to do that. In the light of assaults upon our mental stability we affirm our position upon the rock of God’s character and work on our behalf. We stand on secure ground in our relationship with Christ Jesus our Lord.

Psalm 56:3-4, 8-11

*“3 What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.
4 In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.
8 Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?
9 When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me.
10 In God will I praise his word: in the LORD will I praise his word.
11 In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.”*

“But sanctify (make Holy) the Lord God in your hearts: and [be] ready always to [give] an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15).

APPLICATION

We take our stand upon the rock that is our Saviour and Lord, and we rest secure in his love, mercy and grace towards us. There is no other rock of stability in this world or beyond it.

We can rest secure in the Holy Spirit’s ability to give us the words we need to rejoice in the Lord with at the times of greatest pressure. Our sole challenge is to walk close to Jesus and we will receive all we need in the time we need it.

Psalm 119:43

“And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments.”

REFLECTION

‘And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth’. The Psalmist recognizes a reality of the Jewish Age, that the Holy Spirit could be taken away from a servant due to sin, or even that a task had been completed. The permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit only begins on the Day of Pentecost, and the best is yet to come in the Millennial Kingdom of the Lord Jesus when his ministries will expand again. He fears the loss of the Holy Spirit, and he knows that wickedness is the main cause of this in Old Testament times. He seeks the joy of the Word of God, not the temporary pleasures of sin for a short season. Psalm 6:8-9, Hebrews 11:25.

Psalm 50:14-16

*“14 Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:
15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.
16 But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth?”*

The Psalmist seeks the Lord's grace and mercy, and the conviction of the Holy Spirit upon him always, so that he might not sin and place himself outside the ministry of the Spirit in that day. He is also praying that the ministries of the Word might never cease from his mouth; but that he might serve as a teacher of the truth to all who will hear, all the days of his life. Only with a life long ministry could he be assured that the Holy Spirit would remain active within him.

Psalm 51:11-17

*“11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.
 12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.
 13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.
 14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.
 15 O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.
 16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.
 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”*

'Word of truth'. It is the ministries of the Word of God that this man is called to fulfil in this life, and he loves the Word of God with all his heart and he sees in the "truth" of God the hope of his people for restoration and future ministries. He sees that all people's destiny, but especially Israel's is bound up with the Word of God and their reception and application of it.

Utterly is from two Hebrew words - 'ad / me'od, as far or much, and exceedingly, greatly. It is a reflection of the horror of the thought that the psalmist allows for a moment to enter his mind; that he might utterly lose the blessing of the Word through the ministry of the Holy Spirit within. He wants to minister until he dies, and his hope is in the "judgements of God" – the promises of the Word that he will serve until death brings him into the presence of the Lord his God. This is the first of a series of strong affirmations, where he says "I will....", reflecting his commitment.

Psalm 71:17-18

*“17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.
 18 Now also when I am old and grey headed, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.”*

Romans 5:8-11

*“8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.
 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.
 11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”*

APPLICATION

Lord fill us with your Holy Spirit this day and every day of our life, as we worship and serve you until we see you face to face in heaven.

Psalm 119:44-45

“So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever. And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.”

REFLECTION

The Psalmist is determined to guard and value the Law of God forever and ever. This was a way of saying, "until time ends", and was a way of reminding yourself that time will end one day and eternity takes over and continues, as it was before this space-time universe was made. It was a powerful phrase that reminded the believer that this entire universe is a temporary creation and it will be folded up like an old tired blanket one day and put away. 2 Peter 3:10-18, Revelation 21:1ff. True freedom to live in space and time comes to the believer when they see that this universe is but a temporary thing, and that heaven is our home and destination. With this firmly in mind we are now free of all the temptations and distractions of this temporary world.

"I will walk in roomy places, because I frequently seek after your directions and instructions from your Word of Truth". What is your expectation of the Lord believer? Do you expect grace, mercy and gifts of love, or are you waiting for the Lord to "zap" you for some past sinful action. We have God's Holy Word on it; you can expect grace, mercy and love from your heavenly father. Psalm 103:10-18. The Psalmist knows the Lord his God, and even though the Exiles are presently facing judgement for their sin in and through slavery, they can transform the constrictions of their condition by their attitude towards it. Their slavery can be a walk in "roomy places", that is, they can serve freely in all the things God calls them to in that place. Note the strong affirmations here – "I will keep, I will walk...."

Wherever we serve the Lord there is “room to serve”; there is the right space, time, and resources to achieve the purposes of God. True freedom is the mental attitude that sees that you are “free to serve” in the place you find yourself. As Dr Viktor Frankl discovered in the death camps of World War II, the last freedom of man is to respond honestly to what is happening to you. We are always free to respond to the reality we face, and the psalmist broke through in chains to that understanding, just as Frankl did in the death camp. Matthew 7:13-23, John 5:39, Ephesians 5:17-18.

There is also the active and deliberate determination of the Psalmist expressed here, that he **will live and walk** in the sphere of freedom. He will conduct his life in the manner described in the scriptures, and he will always have “open space” to serve, for he walks the path of God’s direction. Dr Scroggie quotes an old Saxon proverb regarding this verse before us. “He who goes the beaten and right path will have no brambles hit him across the face.”

John 8:30-36

*30 As he spake these words, many believed on him.
 31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;
 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
 33 They answered him, We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?
 34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.
 35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.
 36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”*

APPLICATION

There is true freedom only as the bond slave of Jesus. Let us devote ourselves to his service, for in this Holy Spirit empowered place we will always have “room to move” and joy forever. Let us keep the heavenly perspective on all we face in this temporary world. The apparent solidity of this world is an illusion, and the world of quantum physics that explains this is known only to a few. Let us be taught by the scriptures to value each day as one to serve the Lord, but see in eternity our home and destiny.

Psalm 119:46-47

“I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed. And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. ”

REFLECTION

‘I will speak’: Here we have the next strong affirmations of faith and practise. He will keep the truth, he will walk in the truth, and he will speak the truth of God to all. He will speak before kings and he will not be silent, or ashamed of the truth he speaks. Psalm 138:1. Daniel would live this verse out dramatically, as would his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (renamed by the pagans – Shadrach, Meshak and Abed-Nego). Daniel 2:31ff, 3:16ff, 5:17ff. Jesus warns us all that we must be ready to give testimony to the truth wherever we go. Matthew 10:18-20, Mark 8:38.

I will not be ashamed. Paul stood before the Roman Governors of a number of Roman Provinces and their magistrates, testified to the truth, saving some, and fearlessly witnessing to all. Acts 16:35ff, 18:12ff, 24:10ff, 26:1ff. Paul was “not ashamed”, and he uses this very phrase in his letter to the Roman church to emphasize that this is where the believer needs to stand at all times. 1 Peter 4:14ff, 1 John 2:28.

Romans 1:13-17

*13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.
 14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.
 15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.
 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.
 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”*

I will delight. Once again the Psalmist sings of his devotion to the Lord and his delight in the things of the Lord. All believers delight in the Lord’s Word, for they are the letters of love to us from the one who loved us and gave himself for us. If a person claims to be a Christian and says they do not love the Word they are lying – you cannot love the Lord and fail to love his words to you! John 15:7-17.

I have loved.... Once again the affirmation of faith that we will all rejoice in as we reflect upon the person and work of Jesus. We have loved the Word, and we will keep on loving the Word.

Psalm 19:7-11

*7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.
 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.
 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.
 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.*

11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.”

APPLICATION

Let us affirm our love of the Word of God more and more, and let us delight in the study of the Word often through each week. Let us worship the Lord in holiness and truth.

Notes

Psalm 119:48

“My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.”

REFLECTION

I will lift up my hands. To lift up the hands was to pray but also to recognize a superior and give respect to them. The Psalmist lifts up his hands in respect to the Law itself, recognizing his source of life and peace in the precepts of God. To know about God is one thing, but to know truly about the Lord and His Word is to worship in response immediately and that is the spirit that the Psalmist catches here – he reflects for a moment and he worships again.

‘Which I have loved’ is a restatement of what he said in vs.47. Can we say how much we love something or someone too many times? Some feel the Psalmist overdoes it and yet the lover will never feel they can say this too many times. He reflects and worships again and again, and as they trudged towards Babylon the captives found in this their strength to face each new day, and the new life they would meet there. It is worship alone that transforms difficult times. They could not change the fact of their captivity, but they could change the nature/impact of their captivity.

‘I will meditate in thy statutes’: To live in the Word is the thought here, and the challenge is to do this each day as we advance through the pressures of the most difficult days. As the captives walked towards Babylon they could do one of only two things. They could either sink into despair at their captivity, or transform each day with worship, by seeking God’s perspective on their situation. Only as they lived in the Word would they not be living in slavery.

APPLICATION

What situation do we need to transform today? I doubt it will be as drastic as the Exiles felt as they walked to Babylon, and yet we read here how some at least changed their lives on that journey. From Ezekiel we know that many didn’t change their perspective on the march, and only years later, under his ministry, would they repent and be transformed, and be able to sing this Psalm. By the time of the revival of Ezekiel they were all able to sing this song, and that is our challenge. Let us bring our lives into captivity to this perspective on life and live in the Word to such an extent that we seek God’s “well done” in all we do in the Plan. We can be slaves and yet live as if we are kings – that is God’s will.

DOCTRINES:

DELIVERANCE

WORSHIP AND PRAISE

CONFIDENCE

Notes

SECTION SEVEN (ZA'IN)

Psalm 119:49

“Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.”

REFLECTION

In the New Testament we have the clarion call to “study to show ourselves approved of God”. 2 Timothy 2:15, Hebrews 5:11-14. It is the call to saturation of the mind with the things of God, for only as the Word is more real than our life circumstances will we be truly stabilized under the pressures that can come upon us. Few of us have faced the terrible ordeal of the Exiles as they trudged towards the canals of Babylon to spend their last days working there. In the midst of such a situation however, they found glory in seeking to discover God’s path for them there.

“Remember” is the word that is a common command in both Testaments, for we can only recall what we have learned and invested time into. The Psalmist seeks the Lord’s strength and power to recall the scriptures he has studied and upon which he stabilizes his kind in **hope**. The people will need to express great patience and hope in the Lord’s deliverance. The Babylonian Empire was as great as the Assyrian before it and there was no obvious weakness that would lead to its collapse. Even if it fell the slaves of Babylon who survived any invasion could expect to be the slaves of the conquerors.

God had other plans for the Jews and they were plans for good not evil, and a deliverer had been appointed to give them freedom and the right to be a province in the Persian Empire. God had chosen Cyrus the Great from eternity past to be the deliverer of the Jewish people. 2 Chronicles 36:22-23, Isaiah 44:28, 45:1, Daniel 1:21, 6:28, 10:1. The comfort for the Exiles was to be found in the words of Isaiah from 150 years before, words of hope that God had called by name a man who would deliver them and shepherd them back to their land. The challenge until he arrived was to worship the Lord and remember his Word. In advance of deliverance we are challenged to thank the Lord for what he will do.

Psalm 105:1-5

- 1 O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people.*
- 2 Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.*
- 3 Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.*
- 4 Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore.*
- 5 Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;”*

Psalm 107:1-2

- 1 O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
- 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;”*

Psalm 71:14-16

- 14 But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.*
- 15 My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof.*
- 16 I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.”*

APPLICATION

As we stand in difficult places through hard times, let us rest upon the promises of God’s Word and express our confidence in the Lord’s deliverance in our worship. Let our prayer always be for the ministries of the Holy Spirit upon us to encourage and strengthen our walk with Jesus. We are with Him, and will be forever, and He has a plan for us.

Psalm 119:50

“This [is] my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.”

REFLECTION

There is only the consolation of men or of God. We will either be cuddled by those we love and encouraged/consoled by their words and gestures, or we will be established on even firmer ground. The comfort of men is encouraging and in the Holy Spirit’s filling we are to be encouragers of our brethren, but our brethren are not always there, and they also suffer and die eventually. If we depend on men alone we will always be bereft at some point. It is in the fellowship of Jesus and the Holy Spirit that we are alone permanently and solidly encouraged every day.

The Psalmist, with all who walk with him, is depressed and the situation they face is truly “depressing”. It is not sin to be depressed at times, for it simply means we are rightly related to the reality of our suffering. Depression is part of the human condition since the Fall of Adam, and we will have waves of tears and sadness at times. These waves are the recognition of our limits as men and women before the challenges of sin and death. It is what we do with our

depression times that determines whether we will be victorious in fellowship with Jesus, or whether our circumstances will triumph over us. Romans 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 10:5, Hebrews 12:12-13.

The Word of God and its precious promises are the comfort and encouragement to the Psalmist in the midst of his present miserable condition, for he sees in the prophetic words of scripture that the Lord has a plan and it will work out for him and the people of Judah. The Holy Word sustains the life that remains within them, and brings newness of life to their tired bodies and battered spirits. Psalm 27:13, 28:7, 42:8-11, 94:19.

Romans 5:1-5

*"1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:
2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;
4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:
5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."*

APPLICATION

Let us apply to the soul as the healing balm of God his Holy Word, for in its promises we will find comfort and the grounds of hope and confidence to worship and serve now and forever. Let us be known as the people who defeat depression in their worship and service of the Risen Lord.

Psalm 119:51

"The proud have had me greatly in derision: [yet] have I not declined from thy law."

REFLECTION

Derision – *luts*, is to *ridicule*, to *mock* and treat another with *contempt*, it is the behaviour of the arrogant person who has joined the satanic viewpoint, and so is totally deluded by the false sense of superiority that Satan gives his team members. Jesus warned us that we would be hated for the truth and we do well to remember the malice of the enemy towards us. When facing hatred no biblically based believer is to be upset or surprised, but to be prayerful towards the lost, who are simply expressing their eternal destiny in their despising of us and our Lord. John 16:8-11.

John 15:18-23

*"18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.
19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.
20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.
21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.
22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.
23 He that hateth me hateth my Father also."*

Proud – *zed*, are *arrogant* and *presumptuous*. The hatred of the lost towards those who rebuke them by their behaviour and words will be great at times, and we are to stand with dignity against all such that abuse the truth. Acts 8:23, 1 Peter 3:14-16. Remember that pride is the sin of Satan, and all who deliberately choose to follow after his rebellious path will be overcome by pride and arrogance at some point in time.

The challenge is not to be distracted by the things that can separate us from the blessing that God would give us in fellowship with the Lord Jesus. This means we stand against sin and evil policies, and we reject the paths of intrigue and embrace only the paths of righteousness and peace. It means we stand against those who seek their own profit and seek the path of service to the Lord our God. We do not turn aside from the path of God and the Word of God. We walk the narrow way to life service for the Lord and eternal rewards in the Lord's will for our life. Matthew 7:13ff. We value the verdict of the angels and the godly dead who have gone before and look on at our witness, well ahead of the verdict of the proud, evil men around us.

Hebrews 12:1-3

*"1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.
3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."*

APPLICATION

Let us value the verdict of those we will spend eternity with, not the verdict of evil men who will never be seen again.

Psalm 119:52

“I remembered thy judgments of old, O LORD; and have comforted myself.”

REFLECTION

W G Scroggie titles this verse, “Sweet water from a dark well”. The Psalmist and his friends are all “fellow captives” of the Babylonian Empire and yet they draw strength from the things God did in David’s golden days, for the power of God does not change as the character of God remains stable and secure. “Yesterday, today and forever”. God’s power remains the same, and so if we face adversity, it is just “for a season”, and will lead to blessing in the Plan of God, for the Plan of God will certainly be successful. Deuteronomy 28:1ff, Psalm 89:52, Hebrews 13:8.

The same God that led Abram from Ur of the Chaldeans, Moses and the people from Egypt, Joshua into the land of promise, and David to victory again and again, would lead his people still and blessing would be the result. Romans 8:28. They were in God’s hands, not their own, and the outcome was secure in the Plan backed by the eternally secure nature of the Character of Almighty God. They were going back to the land of the Chaldeans, where Abram had left over a thousand years before, and they would “get back to basics” regarding their faith walk with God while they were there, and they would leave as a revitalized revived nation, ready to receive their Messiah. Psalm 77:5, 11-13, 105:5, 143:5.

There is comfort for the soul in the encouragement that flows from stability in the Plan of God that every child of God has as their own. We can draw comfort in adversity from the historic accounts of God’s deliverance and guidance in the past, for though the days may be dark we can be sure that the “Sun of Righteousness” will rise in our hearts, and his victory will be seen by all in his time. God knows how to deliver his people, and we have in his Word many examples of his power and glory, in which we can relax, worship and serve in the darkest places. Deuteronomy 4:1-9, 2 Peter 2:4-9.

APPLICATION

Let us comfort our hearts in the present distress we may be experiencing, for the same God who met us as sinners and brought us into a blood bought salvation relationship will keep our hearts now in the present and into the future.

Psalm 119:53

“Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law.”

REFLECTION

‘Horror hath taken hold upon me’: These are powerful words that catch the mental distress of the Psalmist as he grapples with the actions of those who reject the Law of God and insult the believers. It is a deep cause of anguish to all saints when they face the hatred of the lost, and their despising of the Law given by their creator and saviour. It is deep sadness and anguish (not horror) that a saint will always feel in the presence of rejection of the Law of God, for we know that such people can face only judgment in this life and in eternity. Jeremiah 13:17, Daniel 4:19ff, Habakkuk 3:16, Philippians 3:17-19.

Romans 9:1-5

*“1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,
 2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.
 3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:
 4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;
 5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.
 Amen.”*

All we can do in the presence of the wicked is to tell the truth in love and leave them with the same challenge that Paul left the corrupt Roman Procurator of Judea in Acts 26:24-29. The truth is told with clarity and direct politeness. We can recognize the divine institution of free will, and still, recognizing the right of each man to reject God, feel deep sadness at their choices. Our love for the lost is shown by our concern for them, for even if they hate us we keep giving them the truth. Matthew 18:11, Luke 19:10, 2 Corinthians 4:3. The truth is “hid” from them because they will not see it – but their deliberate rejection of the truth will always sadden the true child of God.

APPLICATION

Let us recognize our emotions as we face the reality of the Lake of Fire for those who reject Christ as their Saviour. We do not rejoice in their being lost, even though they may hate us, for we have the heart and mind of Christ within us, and he gave himself for those who killed him. We weep for the lost and keep praying for them and speaking to them as long as we can. We do not give up on people, for the Lord never gave up on us.

Psalm 119:54

“Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.”

REFLECTION

In Psalm 23:5 the Psalmist sang of the Lord setting a table of delight for him in the very presence of his enemies. In a situation where most would have appetite suppression or indigestion the Psalmist sings of a good meal and enjoying the fellowship of the Lord in the midst of the enemy. It is this relaxed mental attitude to which we are called. It is the challenge to find victory in the very presence of the threat of defeat that we see here.

The Exiles marching to Babylon have “no permanent address” any longer. They march to slavery and will live in whatever mud-brick house they can build by the canals they will work on. They will live on the produce of the gardens they must tend and the food they are given, and they have no known set time for their stay as they march towards the city of their captivity, and for most their death. Jeremiah will have the duration of their exile given to him as seventy years and from the time of that revelation the Exiles who believe the Word of God will have a set date for release, but all but the very youngest will not live to see it. Jeremiah 25:11-12, Daniel 9:2.

In the midst of this uncertainty as they march towards the city of their captivity the believers rejoice in the nightly “dwelling place” under the stars, and rejoice in the fact that they now see all their life as simply a “pilgrimage” under the stars heading towards heaven, and the welcome of the God who loves them. They can now sing of the glory of the Law of God, for it is in his provision of doctrine for them to walk in, that the Lord gives them the grounds to rejoice. Psalm 89:1, 101:1.

Hebrews 11:13-16

“13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”

APPLICATION

Are we still tied up in our temporary address down here? We are citizens of heaven and strangers and pilgrims here. We have no continuing city here. We must take care of ourselves while we are here, and work for our bread, but through prayer we depend upon the Lord here and now, and our focus is upon service and worship not acquiring material goods here.

Psalm 119:55

“I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night, and have kept thy law.”

REFLECTION

‘I have remembered thy name, O LORD’: Remember – *zakar*, to recall to mind. The name of God is the summary of his holy and dependable Character. The name of God alone stabilized Moses when he heard it for the first time. Exodus 3:13-19. “I AM THAT I AM”, as it is translated into the King James English captures the mystery and dignity of God, as the author of space and time. God is the “self-existent one”, who is the author of space and time itself. This name is the reminder that God is from beyond this universe, and actually is the author of it.

When we bring to mind the holy name of God we are confronted with the truth of our “creatureliness” and God’s nature as Creator and Saviour of all who come to him. It is the reminder that we are in the hands of the one who made all things and will unmake them one day. 2 Peter 3:10-18. It is the reminder that all that appears solid is just energy in arrangement. It is the truth that should calm our worries and settle our fears in the heart of God.

Name – *shem* is not only used for identification but also includes what it is that makes the person distinctive and individual, i.e. his attributes character and even actions. The doctrine of the Character of God is to be our spiritual “First Aid” when we face worry and fears, for the nature of our God is a rock upon which we can rest. We are safe in the hands of the Almighty, for He indeed is the Almighty one. It is in the dark places of the night that we find fear will capture our soul, but in the night we can rest secure in the Lord’s Word, for his Word is for us, and when we guard it in our soul it will keep our minds safe from despair.

Deuteronomy 33:27-29

"27 The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.

28 Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew.

29 Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

APPLICATION

Let us draw our strength in the dark of the night; as fears grip our soul let us draw our strength from the reality of the Character of God. It is the stability that knowing God creates within that will keep us in the worst places. We will be kept in these places for the Lord our God has directed us into them in accordance with his eternal Plan.

Psalm 119:56

"This I had, because I kept thy precepts."

REFLECTION

'Because I kept thy precepts'. He has **kept** or *guarded, attended to* God's precepts, and the result has been joy in the midst of pressures, and rejoicing in the midst of situations that would otherwise create despair. He has had stability because of the Word of God, because the Word is based upon the foundation of the Character of God.

In the dark places we rejoice. Psalm 42:8, 63:6, 77:6, 139:18. As Nehemiah would sing, "The joy of the Lord is my strength". Nehemiah 8:10, Proverbs 10:29, Habakkuk 3:19. Sing with your brethren these songs believer.

Psalm 18:17-22

"17 He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me.

18 They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay.

19 He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.

20 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.

21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.

22 For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me."

1 John 3:18-24

"18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us."

APPLICATION

We face the daily choice in the dark valleys of this brief life, will we walk with rejoicing in the Character and Plan of Almighty God, or will we walk in the fears that the darkness brings into our limited and fragile minds? Let us stand with David and Nehemiah, and the Exiles as they learned of the Lord of God in the midst of pressures.

We are weak and fragile – that is just the "normal state of man" – the result of the Fall of Adam – but in the filling of the Holy Spirit we can rise up like an eagle from its nest and be strong. Isaiah 40:28-31.

DOCTRINES:

GOD: COMFORT FOR BELIEVERS

MERCY

PERSECUTION

SECTION EIGHT (CHETH)

Psalm 119:57

"[Thou art] my portion, O LORD: I have said that I would keep thy words."

REFLECTION

'My portion, O LORD': The word **portion** – *cheleq*, means *share*, and expresses something allotted to be held in possession by the recipient. Our lives are "hid" in Christ Jesus through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, by which we have been entered into vital union with God. Colossians 3:3. Because of our relationship with the Lord we can express the emotion and truth statement that the Lord is "our portion", for we are his and he is ours! Psalm 16:5, 73:26, 142:5.

We can place ourselves in the Lord's hands for guidance and direction or correction. We can relax in his hands, for we are his and our path is to be his path for us. We seek God's way, for we see that God's way alone is what will give safety in time and reward eternally.

Jeremiah 10:23-24

"23. O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

24. O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing."

'Keep thy words'. "For thy words O LORD are a lamp to my feet and a light to my path and are able to cleanse my ways" (vs.9). We can relax on the path, for we can relax with the person of God, the Plan of God, and the Word of God is our guide to the plan. It is only as we open the Word often that we have the comfort and assurance of the Lord in the details of the Plan that we cannot see. At times we do not see the path ahead at all, but we know who it is alongside us and we know that the Holy Spirit within us will guide us to left or right if we need to change direction.

APPLICATION

Let us live the reality of the Lord being ours and we being his. Let us rejoice in the truth that is captured in the word "Portion", for all we have, are are is God's and we are His indeed. Let us seek that deep fellowship that will keep us safe each and every day.

Psalm 119:58

"I intreated thy favour with [my] whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word."

REFLECTION

Intreat – *chalah*, is dependent upon the context in which it is used. Its primary meaning is 'to be sick' yet many times its obvious meaning is 'to become weak', or without strength and as in this case, to become weak by over-exertion. The words, 'I **intreated ... with [my] whole heart**', shows an intensity of emotion, not only in becoming weak (**intreat**) but also in the phrase **whole heart** (the whole of my inner man).

Favour – *paniyim*, means *the face of*, or in context, *the face of God*, therefore the phrase could be rendered "*I exerted by whole being before your presence*". This is passionate prayer by the Psalmist and again and again we see this level of commitment in prayer. We are being challenged by the Psalmist to give ourselves whole heartedly into our faith walk with God, not be half hearted at all. We will be overwhelmed with fear at times, and the anti-dote to these waves of negative emotion is to embrace the positive emotional waves of the Holy Spirit in the joy of the Lord.

'Be merciful unto me': Mercy – *this is an appeal for help from Almighty God to his creature*. We are inferiors and we know it, but we can appeal for mercy and grace and expect the Lord to respond this way, for we are beloved, never despised. Our appeal is based firmly upon the doctrine of the Character of God – his mercy and love is dependable.

Psalm 86:1-7

" 1 Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I am poor and needy.

2 Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.

3 Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily.

4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

6 Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications.

7 In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me."

'According to thy word' – The Bible records God's merciful actions in the past and the Psalmist knows he can expect mercy in the present. We do not expect or ask for mercy in accordance with any other standard than that of God's past behaviour towards his beloved ones. We base our requests upon the Character of God, as revealed in the Word of God. It is God's own revelation that gives us confidence.

Psalm 56:3-11

*3 What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.
 4 In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.
 5 Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts are against me for evil.
 6 They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.
 7 Shall they escape by iniquity? in thine anger cast down the people, O God.
 8 Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?
 9 When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me.
 10 In God will I praise his word: in the LORD will I praise his word.
 11 In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me."*

APPLICATION

Let us be passionate in our faith – pouring our heart out to the Lord in power. Let us withhold nothing from the Lord, bringing all our fears and worries before the throne of grace and mercy and expect the Lord to meet our needs there. The Lord can be trusted to transform our dark days with the rising Sun of Righteousness in our hearts.

Psalm 119:59

"I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies."

REFLECTION

'I thought on my ways': **Thought** is from the Hebrew *chashab*, which has the root meaning of *plait* as in *braiding* the hair, or *weaving* a basket. The old commentator Adam Clarke likens it to embroidery, which needs close attention to both sides of the work. The picture is certainly one of "close scrutiny of **my ways**" – *derek*, my way of life. We have but one life and yet so many people live as if they might have another chance at life! How careful are we of thinking and decisions and service opportunities? Do we embrace the leading of the Holy Spirit and throw ourselves into opportunities for service? What is the path for us? Let us heed the inner ministries of the Holy Spirit and be obedient to the Spirit, not neglectful of the Word.

'Turned my feet unto thy testimonies': Psalm 19: 7-11. There is thinking and doing, and the Lord calls us to advance beyond the academic assent and actually do the work we are called to! James 2:14-26. My old mentor, Dr J Vernon McGee, quotes the old saying, "there's the believing and the behaving" and we are to get both right. Let us "turn our feet" into the right paths and walk them daily! Hebrews 12:12ff. The prodigal son could have sat in the pig pen of the foreign country and kept telling himself daily, "I am not a pig", but until he got up and headed home he was still acting and smelling like a pig! Luke 15:17ff.

APPLICATION

Let us be thoughtful about decisions we must make and seek the Holy Spirit's guidance daily. Let us walk with God and seek the path of God in all things. Let us "turn our feet" into God's paths, not walk after the things of this world.

Psalm 119:60

"I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments."

REFLECTION

When the prodigal son had come to himself he immediately arose, and came to his father (Luke 15:20). He made **haste**, for his father was his last and only hope. The Psalmist realises that a second out of fellowship is a second too long when opportunity may be lost. We do not have the time to waste in this life, and we are bound to follow the Lord in all things. Let us not delay obedience, for we do not know whether we have tomorrow! Proverbs 27:1.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4, Luke 4:4). There ought to be an eagerness on the part of God's people to hear and obey the Word of God, for it is our life and there is hope no-where else.

The Psalmist **'delayed not'**: There is never any reason to delay obedience. In the Navy we had an old order that summed up this concept here. The officer would give the order he required obeyed, and then ask, "Understood?" The

reply would come back, "Yes Sir". The officer would then simply say, "Make it so!" That was the order for immediate action, and that is the spirit here in the Psalmist's life. Having heard the Word, understood the Word, what possible reason is there for neglect of obedience to the Word? James 2:14-26. A faith that does not work out is not biblical faith.

Hebrews 3:7-15

*"7 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,
8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:
9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.
10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.
11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)
12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.
13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.
14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;
15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation."*

Luke 12:16-23

*"16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:
17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?
18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.
19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.
20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?
21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.
22 And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.
23 The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment."*

APPLICATION

Let us not make the grave error of believing we have tomorrow – for it may be a **grave** error - we may be in our grave tomorrow! We have today, and if the order is given today, then let us obey it today and serve the Lord as we are called to serve him. Let us heed the Lord's words in his parable above, and not be fools with time, but use every day to the glory of the Lord.

Psalm 119:61

"The bands of the wicked have robbed me: [but] I have not forgotten thy law."

REFLECTION

'The bands of the wicked have robbed me': **bands** – *chebel*, is a *cord or rope* or in a figurative sense, that which is roped together by some bond or other such as a *company of men* bonded by a common purpose. **Robbed** – *ud*, means *to return or go about, or to surround*. It would appear that the Psalmist has lost everything to the "bands" of the enemy forces, and this was the most common thing when a nation was conquered. An army was paid by plunder in this day, and so after the capture of Jerusalem the Babylonian forces had simply entered every house and plundered them for their own purposes.

Wicked. It is a very hard thing to recognize that those who abuse you, and get away with it, are wicked, and yet God allows them to triumph for a time. As he was robbed of his earthly goods the Psalmist remembers the Word and its precious promises, and the comfort of the Word is more real to him than the theft of his earthly goods. I have lost thousands of dollars the last eleven years under the great pressures I have walked through. The Lord has been with me in the midst of this, and in this time of such loss I have written the most powerful books in my life in the Holy Spirit's power. Yet as I write these very words, the evil men are still abusing others and "hold me still in their grip" by their decisions. My challenge right now, this very day, is to stand with the Psalmist and say aloud – "Lord – your Word is more real to me that any money lost, for these evil men do not hold me in their power – for I am in the hands of Almighty God".

'I have not forgotten thy law'. The Psalmist states aloud his commitment to this truth – for it is in the memory of the truth of the Word that we can put our losses into the eternal context and rejoice in the Lord over all things. We cling to the truth of God's Word in such times and we do not budge from our place of faith-rest. We rest upon the promises of God - that the Lord will bless us and lift us up again. If we live we can worship, and if we live we must open our eyes to see the Holy Spirit given opportunities to serve Him and we will do so.

APPLICATION

At times we will be “robbed” of all we have, or the things we value from our families, but we have the Lord’s Word on it, He will not let us be cast down without lifting us up to heaven in glory and with eternal rewards. There will not be any loss in time that is not made good in eternity – and the rewards there are eternal – no moths and no rust will spoil the joy in them. Let us serve now and leave our tomorrow to the Lord who’s plan we are part of.

Psalm 119:62

“At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments.”

REFLECTION

At midnight I will rise and give thanks! When we face great stress we will find we awake at midnight and then again at 0100, 0300, and then again at 0500 and we can be in a cold or hot sweat at such times. Rather than awakening with stress the Psalmist awakes to give thanks in the midst of his pressure situation. The best example of this principle is the singing of Paul and Silas in the Philippian Jail at midnight. They were in pitch darkness, their backs torn by a lash, their feet jammed into stocks, and their arms chained, but they sang Psalms – possibly this one. Acts 16:25ff.

‘Righteous judgements’ (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3; 1 John 1:9). It is the truth of God’s Word that stabilizes our worrying hearts and minds. When God pronounces his verdict upon any matter it is final, but often we need to wait for the Lord’s timing before a thing is settled this way. Until then we sing at mid-night, even if our back is torn by the lash. Deuteronomy 4:8, Psalm 19:9. This is the biblical standard of rejoicing under pressure – “Just do it!”

Psalm 42:5-8

5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.

6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.

7 Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.

8 Yet the LORD will command his loving kindness in the day time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.”

APPLICATION

Let us praise the Lord, for in our worship we transform the energy around us and make darkness light. Let us be followers of Paul and Silas and praise the Lord in the midnight of our great distress and see the day dawn with salvation and joy amongst God’s people.

Psalm 119:63

“I [am] a companion of all [them] that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.”

REFLECTION

Companion, a close *associate*. We are known by our friends and in our friendships we see our values written in large letters. It is the company that we keep that illuminates our values for all to see. If we value the company of evil men, that is because we are evil men ourselves deep within. Let us assess our friendships and value the company of those who value good things and good people.

Fear – *yare*, refers to feelings of *trepidation*, of *acute apprehension*. There is a time to be fearful, and that is when we are falling short of the glory of God in our actions. We need to “quake in our boots” if we are living below the faith standard the Lord calls us to. Let us recall the words of the writer to the early Jewish Church and be fearful of falling short of grace and truth. It is exceedingly sinful to live in unbelief when the Word calls us to advance in truth.

Hebrews 4:1-6

1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.
2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

5 And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.

6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:"

The writer to the Jewish Church reminds the people that there is reason to be fearful of the Lord if we consistently fall short of his divine standards. It is "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31), and "our God is a consuming fire". Hebrews 12:29.

Those who are "keeping his precepts" are those who the Psalmist searches out as his companions. The best companions we can have through this life are those who value and keep the Word of God, for they share our values and can be depended upon in their decision making.

APPLICATION

Let us be fearful of living below the faith standard to which we are called, for we are without excuse before the Lord if we fall short this way. The Lord is very clear in his Word, and we are called to have faith!

Psalm 119:64

"The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes."

REFLECTION

"O LORD: teach me thy statutes". There is great pressure at times, and at times our goods are all stolen, and yet the Psalmist in the midst of loss and pressure sings of the mercy of the Lord filling the whole earth. The earth is "full of mercy" – filled up to overflowing with goodness and kindness in the midst of the evils that can pre-occupy our hearts too often. The only way to deal with evil people's impact is to multiply the impact of those who are good and kind. Philippians 4:4-12. It is the application of Holy Spirit filled thinking. The Psalmist looks at his fellows as he trudges towards captivity and even though they are all in chains they can rejoice in their kindness to each other in their distress. In their little shows of goodness and kindness they transform their servitude into the spiritual fruit of joy. Psalm 145:8-9.

Psalm 33:5-9

"5 He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.

6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

7 He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.

8 Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.

9 For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast."

APPLICATION

Let us turn pressure into praise, by paying attention to the many instances of the grace and mercy of the Lord towards us.

Let us devote ourselves to learning more daily about the Word of God and worship His majesty.

Let us always ensure that worship overflows in Holy Spirit fruitfulness in joy, love, and service to our brethren.

DOCTRINES:

GOD: ANCHOR OF THE SOUL

EVIL

FEAR

SECTION NINE (TETH)

Psalm 119:65

“Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD, according unto thy word.”

REFLECTION

Thou hast dealt well. It is good to begin a prayer with the spirit of thankfulness, as praise always begins the best worship. These men are walking into slavery and yet they praise God and thank Him for his goodness towards them. It would be many years before the Exiles would see fully that the Lord had delivered them through their captivity. Those left behind in the land would nearly all be killed in the final battles in 587-586 BC. This was still at least twelve years away at this point, but already the eyes of faith are operating amongst some of the Exiles and they see that in their captivity the Lord has “dealt well” with them. Psalm 13:6, 16:5-6, 18:35, 23:5-6, 30:11.....

‘According unto thy word’. We can return to a place of rest when we are trusting in the Word of God. 1 Chronicles 29:10-16, Psalm 116:7. It is the Word of God that announces our stability and lays out the principles by which we are safe and secure. It is the promises of the Word of God that provide a focus for us into the future, and speak of what will be. The challenge for us is always to act on the basis of the reality of the Word before we see it fulfilled in time.

APPLICATION

Let us begin every day, and let us face every problem, with worship and praise, remembering that the Word of God is our source of stability, and we will always find peace resting our heart and mind upon the promises of God.

Psalm 119:66

“Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments.”

REFLECTION

Teach – *Jamad*, to goad him into a true, experiential understanding of them so that he will be able to exercise **good judgment** and speak **good knowledge**. To learn all good things is always of benefit to self, but even more for blessing to others. Psalm 72:1-2. The Psalmist is ready to take the discipline of the Lord, even the “rod” of instruction across his back. He is ready to receive anything that the Lord gives out to him, but his desire is to grow in wisdom, and that means to fully know truth in the battles of daily life, and bless others. Nehemiah 9:13-17, Proverbs 22:15, 29:15.

‘Good’ – *tub* is the same as in English and means *anything of genuine value* whether it is in quality of achievement morals or behaviour. Any decision making that lacks moral goodness at its core is purely legalistic and dead. It will bring disrepute upon the righteousness of God, whereas the moral goodness that stems from the Love, Mercy, and Grace of God always brings life and peace to all.

Proverbs 2:1-9

- 1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;
- 2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;
- 3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;
- 4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;
- 5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.
- 6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.
- 7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.
- 8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.
- 9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.”

‘Judgement’ – *ta’am* means *taste, perception, intelligence and decision making*. **‘Knowledge’ – *da’ath*,** is more than information stored in our mind; it is perception, skill, discernment and wisdom. We gain all we need to walk through this life from the Word of God, and as the Holy Spirit takes the Word and applies it into the fabric of daily life we are a blessing to others and our walk is joyful in the midst of great pressure.

I was awoken this morning at 3am in great distress at the pressure situation I presently face. I prayed and praised my way through until 0630 when I arose and began my working day in the quiet and peaceful joy of the Lord. The promises of God’s Word, because they are the words of the Lord Jesus to our hearts, stabilize my soul. “The Joy of the Lord is my strength alone”. Nehemiah 8:10.

Isaiah 11:1-5

“1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;
3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:
4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.
5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.”

APPLICATION

In dark and difficult hours let us draw near the Lord Jesus and rest upon his Word for our provision and his love as the foundation of our sustainable and inexhaustible Joy.

Psalm 119:67

“Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.”

REFLECTION

The Psalmist and his friends have been truly humbled as they walk into Babylonian exile, with the few goods they could take with them strapped to their backs. The Exiles from 605 and 597 were allowed to take their tools of trade and their clothing, as they were going to work and the Babylonians didn't want to provide anything for them that they didn't need to. These men had been humbled and bowed down by the defeat of their nation by Egypt and then Babylon. They had seen the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 26ff come terribly to pass upon them. The nation had gone astray and it had paid the ultimate price of the Fifth Cycle of Divine Discipline with their total deportation. Leviticus 26:1ff.

They had ignored the Word of God both in written form and from the prophets sent to warn them to repent. They had ignored all that God had said to them and they now realised that Moses words were the testimony against them. They had been warned by the Lord and they had ignored the Lord. They had sinned and wandered off into all manner of distracting sins, but now they saw the truth and they have guarded the Word in their soul like the gold it is. Our challenge is exactly the same as these people were faced with. In difficult days, and serious testing times, will we value the Word and feed upon it or ignore it and wander away?

Deuteronomy 32:15-18, 45-47.

“15 But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.
16 They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger.
17 They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.
18 Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.
45 And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel:
46 And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law.
47 For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life: and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.”

Hebrews 12:1-15.

“1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.
3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.
4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.
5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:
6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.
7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?
8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.
9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?
10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.
11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.
12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;
13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.
14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;"

APPLICATION

Let us value the Word and feed upon it each and every day of our pilgrimage upon this earth. The Lord's Word is "LIFE" to our soul, and there is safety no-where other than in obedience to its provisions.

Psalm 119:68

"Thou [art] good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes."

REFLECTION

James 1:12-17

"12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted by God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

God is good and God does good things. If bad things are happening then we are challenged by the Word of God to seek the good within them, for God delights in turning the cursing that comes to us in this fallen world into blessing in and through our relationship with Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:28-39. When bad things occur in the Angelic Conflict we are not to be surprised, but seek the Lord instruction as to their significance and their purpose, and seek the Holy Spirit's guidance to turn them to blessing.

Psalm 145:8-14

8 The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.

9 The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.

10 All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee.

11 They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power;

12 To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.

13 Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

14 The LORD upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down."

APPLICATION

Let us seek the goodness of the Lord in all we see around us. God's Plans for us are to give us a future and hope in that future. Let us claim the promises of the Word and advance into praise and worship as we face the apparently strange things that can happen in this presently fallen world.

Psalm 119:69

"The proud have forged a lie against me: [but] I will keep thy precepts with [my] whole heart."

REFLECTION

The proud are those who have sided with Satan in the Angelic Conflict, and they will always hate the righteous, for they cannot stand those who worship the God they resent. John 15:18-21. There is only the choice between two paths in this life; the path of humility before the creator and saviour of mankind, and the path of pride and arrogance. Mankind either bows before God as Lord and King, or bows to no-one in time except their own high opinion of themselves. Such people will always attack the saint of God, and their hatred is to be a badge of honour to us. Psalm 109:1-3, Jeremiah 43:1-3. We are in good company when proud and arrogant men attack us, for they attacked our Lord.

'Forged a lie against me': The word **forged** - *taphal* means to *smear, plaster over, stick, or glue*; Barnes uses the term 'to patch together', which when a story is forged of lies, distortions, of truths out of context that have become lies as a result. The deceptive lies of the enemy will baffle and sadden us at times. The malice of evil towards good is always going to cause us pain as we reflect upon it. We must never be comfortable with malice and evil thinking, for it is the

sight and smell of the Lake of Fire itself! Those who do this to us are to spend eternity in the Lake of Fire, and no pain they cause us in time can ever make us hate them, rather we pity their eternal state. Revelation 20:11-15.

The Psalmist is determined in the presence of evil and malice, **'I will keep thy precepts with [my] whole heart'**. He understands that the only response to evil lies is whole hearted goodness. It is the Word that acts as the antidote to evil and defeats the despair that otherwise gets hold of our soul when we face lies about us. We stand with the Lord and we await his rescue from the lies of evil men. I was seriously attacked by a false preacher many years ago, and had to wait for seven years before the man was undone in his lies by the testimony of others and all knew that I was vindicated then. Until that day I waited upon the Lord for deliverance, I did not trust in lawyers arguing my case. God does such a better job than any court of man! Until vindication comes we celebrate the Lord in whole hearted loving praise and worship. Matthew 5:44. We wait upon the Lord, not passively sitting and snivelling, but in praise and worship.

APPLICATION

Let us praise the Lord, so that our praise and worship always drowns out the lies of malice that will come upon us from evil men and women.

We do not pay attention to lying assaults by those who are doomed to the Lake of Fire, we pity them and pray for them. Worship defeats the assaults of the enemy, and the temptation to "get even", or receive men's justice. We seek a better thing for ourselves and those who hate us.

Psalm 119:70

"Their heart is as fat as grease; [but] I delight in thy law."

REFLECTION

'Their heart is as fat as grease': The fat layers of their body are reflective of the fatty tissue around their hearts and souls. They are fattened for the slaughter of judgment by their own preoccupation with the good things of this life without thought to fitness and health. Jeremiah 51:40, James 5:5. What will we resemble in this life? Will we seek to be the lean athlete and soldier of the Lord, or the fattened calf waiting for the butcher's knife? 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Ephesians 6:10-18. The fat people of the Psalmists day were people who in self centred logic believed they were entitled to all good things and they took too much of good things always and so grew fat and unhealthy. God's servants seek the service of the Lord, not the table of the laden self centred. We are not ever to resemble pigs at the feeding trough!

In the ancient world fat people were considered both prosperous, and also foolish, for a fat person dies young and cannot run or fight to save themselves. Judges 3:17-21, 1 Samuel 4:11-18. To become fat with the heart and skin like grease is to be grossly unfit for active service. It is a disgrace for a man or woman to become unfit for active service for the Lord. The Psalmist identifies amongst the captives heading into Exile that there are no fat men or women, for they are already dead, or have not lasted long. The survivors will be lean and fit and they will be determined to stay that way, for they seek the Lord's path for them and that means they seek active service.

APPLICATION

"I delight in your Word Lord". Let this be our cry daily and let us be fit and strong and ready to do anything required for the Lord our King. This is not a call to yo-yo dieting, but to age-appropriate fitness, so that we can do what the Lord requires of us before our death.

Psalm 119:71

"[It is] good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes."

REFLECTION

The Psalmist reflects upon his suffering and sees that in the results of the affliction he has endured there is goodness and grace. He has learned through suffering more of God than he knew initially and he has seen in his pain that the Lord has loved him all the way through his journey and still loves him. Hebrews 12:10-12. He has been exercised by events and is fitter for the Lord's service through his spiritual exercise! He has truly learned the things of God and he rejoices in them in and through his daily service.

Psalm 94:12-15

*12 Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law;
13 That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.
14 For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance.
15 But judgment shall return unto righteousness: and all the upright in heart shall follow it."*

APPLICATION

Let us rejoice in the learning situations we find ourselves in. Let us be looking for the Lord's teaching hand in all that we experience, for he is always fitting us for more earthly service and abundant heavenly blessing.

Psalm 119:72

“The law of thy mouth [is] better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.”

REFLECTION

God's word is **better** – *tob, pleasanter, more agreeable*. God's Word is better than all the wealth that this world can give, and the path of the Lord is far better than any path that plotting and planning can achieve for fallen man. What can be more valuable than the very words of the mouth of God? This was the way the ancients spoke of the most intimate of words – from the mouth of the person. Wealth is useful and can achieve good things by its careful use, but it is only of value within the Plan of God, and the Word of God alone gives us direction as to the nature of the Plan.

All the wealth we gain in this brief life is left for others to enjoy or waste later. There is nothing permanent in this life except the glory of the Lord. There is nothing of value eternally except our service to the Lord. Proverbs 15:16-17.

Ecclesiastes 6:2-7, 12, 11:9 – 12:1, 7.

“2 A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease.

3 If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say, that an untimely birth is better than he.

4 For he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness.

5 Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known any thing: this hath more rest than the other.

6 Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place?

7 All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled.

12 For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?”

11: 9 Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

10 Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity.

12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”

“Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.” Ecclesiastes 4:6.

APPLICATION

Do not foolishly believe that great wealth will solve your problems believer, for the Lord knows what we need and will always provide what we need.

Our challenge remains to be content with what the Lord have given and serve Him with all our heart and all our energy.

The Joy of the Lord is our strength indeed, when we value fellowship in his Word above all the wealth that men can give us.

DOCTRINES:

BACK-SLIDING AND RECOVERY

DISCIPLINE OF BELIEVERS

POWER

SECTION TEN (YOD)

Psalm 119:73

“Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.”

REFLECTION

‘Thy hands have made me’: The Lord has made us, and that truth is vital to comprehend as we face baffling things in this life, for it puts all life into the context of a created universe, and the purpose of the Creator. It reminds us that the Lord is God indeed and his plan will work out, and time and space will be folded up and put away one day. If this is a created universe then there is a purpose in it and a goal to it. We are created as part of a bigger whole and each of us have a unique part to play in what W G Scroggie calls the “Drama of Redemption”. Psalm 100:3, 111:10, 138:8.

Psalm 139:13-24

“13 For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

17 How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!

18 If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.

.....

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

2 Timothy 3:14-17

“14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

APPLICATION

I am made, and that means I am made for something. Let us reflect each day on what the Lord wants us to achieve this day for his glory, for we are here for that purpose only, not to just please ourselves. Lord give us the understanding we need to fulfil our eternal destiny here and now and praise you now and forever.

Psalm 119:74

“They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word.”

REFLECTION

‘They that fear thee’: All who truly fear the Lord and honour his name will rejoice in the company of genuine believers who love and serve the Lord also. Even unbelievers who know about God and honour the thought of a creator will seek out the company of real believers for they seek to know more of God. The great joy of international travel to me is meeting up with believers in the Lord in strange places and finding within minutes together that any strangeness is gone and fellowship is sweet.

All who love and fear the Lord will love and fellowship with us. Malachi 3:16. Fellowship always involves encouragement, and our patient waiting upon the Lord is an encouragement to others who find patience a hard thing to learn. Our patience encourages others. Psalm 66:16-19, 108:12-13.

Psalm 34:1-7

“1 I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

2 My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.

3 O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.

4 I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

5 They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.

6 This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.
7 The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.”

APPLICATION

Wait upon the Lord brother and sister, and while you wait for the Lord to deliver you, encourage your brethren to also express their hope and confidence in the Lord.

Psalm 119:75

“I know, O LORD, that thy judgments *[are]* right, and *[that]* thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.”

REFLECTION

Thy judgments *[are]* right’: The terrible truth for the Exiles is this truth as they reflect upon the final words of Moses to Israel, warning them of what would happen if they neglected and disobeyed the Word of God. God had been right in his judgments all through Israel’s history, but this had meant total judgment for the Exile’s generation, for the majority of them had ignored the warnings of the prophets, and gone against the clear teaching of the Mosaic Law.

Deuteronomy 32:1-4, 44-47.

*1 Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.
2 My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass:
3 Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God.
4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.
44 And Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people, he, and Hoshea the son of Nun.
45 And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel:
46 And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law.
47 For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life: and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.”*

‘Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me’: God’s compassion never fails his people, Lamentations 3:22-23, but disobedience means that the Lord can only show love through severe discipline. God’s faithfulness is shown in his honesty dealing with us. God will not allow us to stray away from the path of righteousness without rebuke. The Lord has dealt with them harshly, but as they walk towards servitude they rejoice in the discipline of the Lord, for it shows they are children who are loved indeed. Hebrews 12:1-11.

Psalm 89:30-34

*30 If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments;
31 If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments;
32 Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.
33 Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.
34 My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.”*

APPLICATION

Let us keep the Word of God in spirit and in truth. The Lord seeks our passionate love and our whole hearted devotion to the Word of Life. Let us be whole hearted and devoted to the truth in each step we take through today.

Psalm 119:76

“Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.”

REFLECTION

‘Thy word unto thy servant’. The one who afflicts us with discipline for errors on our path is the comforter who will encourage us as we return to the path. God’s **“merciful kindness”** is our comfort, for we are his always, even when we are in error or disobedience. We are always loved and beloved. God’s “word” to us is love and kindness, not ever punishment and affliction without care and concern. Psalm 86:5, 106:4-5, 2 Corinthians 1:3-7.

Isaiah 55:6-12

6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

7 *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

8 *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.*

9 *For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

10 *For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:*

11 *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

12 *For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."*

APPLICATION

We are beloved – the constant recipients of God’s merciful kindness – the objects of God’s love and care forever.

Psalm 119:77

“Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law [is] my delight.”

REFLECTION

Tender mercies’ – *racham*, has the primary meaning of bowels - *intestines*, but as the ancients naturally saw these as the seat of the emotions, it refers to the tender feelings such as love, pity and compassion. The Psalmist recognizes the truth that in dark places we need to know the love of God in the depths of our heart, not the truth in our mind alone. We must feel the love of God in reality, not just theory. Many can speak of love, but only lovers can be in love. God wants us as his lovers, not as his academic theologians. Psalm 51:1-3.

‘That I may live’: There is life nowhere else other than in the vital fellowship we have with Jesus. It is only as we experience his tender mercies within that we know this truth and sing with the psalmists as they walked into captivity. They did not curse the day they were born. Job 10:18; Jeremiah 20:14-15. They rejoiced in the opportunity that God gave them to repent and prosper in their new place of service. Romans 8:28.

‘For thy law [is] my delight’ – this is the passionate faith to which we are called in the filling of the Holy Spirit. Is the study of God’s Word your delight in the Lord? Is the precious time spent in the Word the joy of your day? If it is not you are not walking in the filling of the Holy Spirit, and you need to get there fast, or the day is wasted!

Malachi 3:16-17

16 *Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.*
 17 *And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."*

APPLICATION

God’s tender mercies will come to us every time we open the Word in the filling of the Holy Spirit. So let us do it often.

Psalm 119:78

“Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: [but] I will meditate in thy precepts.”

REFLECTION

Let the proud be ashamed. Many there are through life that will deal with us with perversity and evil motives, but the Psalmist sets the standard for our response to them. Proud and arrogant people who hate the Lord and the Lord’s people will express contempt or loathing towards us at times, but we can rest in the love of Jesus for us and leave them to the Holy Spirit’s conviction. John 16:8-11. God will finally confound all who hate the truth, and they will stand before his throne and be judged for their evil. The day will come when eternal justice will be meted out, but until then let us pray for the lost that they might be delivered from their self conceit and self destructive path. Revelation 20:12-15.

‘[But] I will meditate in thy precepts’: the enemies of the truth will always mock, but we respond with meditation upon the truth within our heart. We do not need to be heard or shout down the evil words, but simply reflect upon the

truth and rest in it. God's Word is always to be rested in and lived within, for in it there is peace and assurance for our future. John 15:22-25.

APPLICATION

Let us respond to hatred with prayer for the lost – for let us remember their eternal fate, and our eternal blessedness. When in doubt about what to do, always meditate upon the promises of God.

Psalm 119:79

“Let those that fear thee turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies.”

REFLECTION

Turn' - *shub*, has the meaning to *return*. The Psalmist is noting a sad fact here that we often ignore in good times, but it creates great distress in bad times. Many who “fear the lord” as genuine believers actually “turn away from us” in difficult times and wander off on their own tangents, and into their own problems. At the very time we need most fellowship there can be little available. The Psalmist prays for restoration of active and comforting fellowship with those who have apparently turned their backs on him.

The reasons for this turning away may not be sinister, but just sadly human distress has got the better of them and they are locked up in their own grief. As the captives headed to Babylonian Exile there were probably around 1000 in 605BC, and around 10,000 in 597BC. This is a big group both times and it would be easy to not see another captive if you were in a different place in the marching column. It would also be common within such a group to have the full “bell curve” of responses to their captivity. Each day people would be different, as things happened, and they responded to the things going on with others around them.

Many people are so bound up in their own grief in great distress that they literally do not even see others around them. It may take some people many days to come to the place where they accept the reality of their captivity and actually respond to events around them normally. For many they will have been in a daze for days. The Psalmist is rightly related to reality, and prays for restoration of fellowship with those who have been “out of it” for days or weeks on the march and he seeks their fellowship and seeks to encourage them again. These people have “known the Word” and the Psalmist seeks to encourage them in the Word again through sweet fellowship as they march together. Galatians 6:1

APPLICATION

Let us not jump to conclusions about why some withdraw from fellowship with us at crucial times. Many are so distressed they simply do not see us.

Let us be sensitive and prayerful towards all we know in distress and always ready to encourage. Let those who are spiritual indeed prove their status by readiness to pray and encourage.

Psalm 119:80

“Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed.”

REFLECTION

‘Sound heart’ – complete and entire, lacking nothing. 2 Timothy 3:16-17. As we strengthen ourselves in the counsel of the Word of God, as taught into the soul and spirit by the Holy Spirit, so we are “thoroughly furnished for all good works”. It is our belief in, and application into life of the counsel of God that creates a sound heart. We become healthy and powerful in the Lord's work by means of the Holy Spirit's filling and teaching/encouraging ministries. The Holy Spirit will always magnify the words of Jesus and the teaching of the Lord, and so the “statutes” of God are the foundation of our life as we open ourselves to Holy Spirit taught Bible study. God has provided pastors and teachers to expound, and the Holy Spirit within to teach each and every born again believer. John 14:14-20, 15:4-14, 26-27, 16:7-15.

‘Not ashamed’ – *bush*, disappointed or distressed Psalm 25:20-21, 32:1-2. **1 John 2:28** “*And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*” The only confidence we can have as we walk this world is when we walk with Jesus in the indwelling power and direction of the Holy Spirit. Then alone can we walk without fear of being tripped up by our Old Sin Nature, or any external darker force. If we seek a life with security and service, then we find it in our honouring the Word with central place in our life, and by walking closely in fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

Proverbs 4:20-27

“20 My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.

21 *Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.*
22 *For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.*
23 *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*
24 *Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.*
25 *Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.*
26 *Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.*
27 *Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.”*

APPLICATION

Brethren let us open our lives to the teaching ministries of the Holy Spirit. Let us walk in Holy Spirit filled power and see the mountains of doubt, fear, and evil removed from our nations. Let us open the Holy Word and allow the Holy Spirit to show us new things that will transform our daily lives to live as the apostles lived. These “new things” are only new because we have been so slack in our study and obedience to the Word.

We operate on the basis of the apostolic faith, Jude 3, and we must open the Word and open our heart to be taught. Too often we tell the scriptures what to say to suit ourselves. Let us hear the Word! Let us walk in the Word in the Holy Spirit's power.

Notes

DOCTRINES:

HOLY SPIRIT: COMFORTER

HOLY SPIRIT: MINISTRY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

HOLY SPIRIT: TEACHER

STABILITY

SECTION ELEVEN (CAPH)

Psalm 119:81

“My soul fainteth for thy salvation: [but] I hope in thy word.”

REFLECTION

‘My soul fainteth for thy salvation’ is an expression of real desperation. Today we would say, this man is holding on by his finger nails! He is so stretched in his faith that he is feeling worn, exhausted, frayed, and desperate. Even though there is little or no human strength left he looks to God alone for his salvation. This verse is incredibly encouraging to me at this time, when I have felt day after day this same level of exhaustion and desperation in my own place of pressure. My comfort is in the Lord alone and my strength is only that given by the Holy Spirit daily – truly we can draw strength from the God of our Salvation.

Psalm 46:1-3

“1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

3 Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.”

W G Scroggie says of this verse, “Eagerness of desire should be matched by energy of hope; faint yet (still) pursuing.” We do not give up on hope, for our hope rests upon the holy Character of God and God does not give up on us. We may fail, but his mercy, grace and power never fails. 2 Timothy 2:12-13. We are focused upon the only source of hope we can have in the midst of pressures we cannot humanly deal with. We rest in the power and provisions of God alone. The greatest provision of God is His Holy Word, for in it we have his policy and plan outlined, and we can depend upon all God says to us. Psalm 73:23-28.

Psalm 42:1-2

“1 As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

2 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?”

APPLICATION

Let us be encouraged by the great saints of the past, who felt extremes of emotion on their journey and kept their focus upon the Lord and their trust in His Holy Word. We will be tired, exhausted, despairing, and baffled at many times on the battlefield of this world, but we can rest secure in the Word of God, for it is backed by the holy and perfect Character of God.

Psalm 119:82

“Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?”

REFLECTION

‘Mine eyes fail’ is similar to the expression in the previous verse, “My soul fainteth”. The psalmist is totally exhausted but still looking for God’s promise of deliverance. This is a powerful expression of what we called today “depression”, and encourages us greatly, for this writer is a great man of faith and yet he feels “little faith” at this point. We must remember that the Lord encouraged us on this very point. He reminded his hearers that faith, “like a grain of mustard seed”, the smallest of the crop seeds, will win the day if it is grounded in Him and His Word. Matthew 13:31, 17:20.

Let us hear the Messianic Psalm, Psalm 69, and see in it the passion of the Lord and his cry, just like the psalmist and our own at times, and yet for so much more reason. He did all this for us, and as we read his words written prophetically 1000 years before the Cross we must ask, what are we being asked to walk through for him? Is it not a small thing to walk where we are asked to walk, given what He has done for us? Ephesians 3:1-13, Colossians 1:24.

Psalm 69:1-7

“1 Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul.

2 I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.

3 I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.

4 They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away.

5 O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.

6 Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.

7 Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face."

'When wilt thou comfort me'? The Holy Spirit within is our comforter through the Word applied deep into our soul and spirit. John 14:16-17, 15:26-27, John 16:7-15, Acts 2:1ff. The psalmist cries out for a time frame, and often we find ourselves here, for we do not know when the deliverance is going to come, but come it will. It is alright to cry out to the Lord in our very human despair and worry, for these things are normal for sinners like us, but we take them to the Lord, and he deals with us, and heals and restores our broken spirit through the midst of them. Psalm 23:5-7.

The Holy Spirit is a Comforter, yet his work is to guide us into all truth and that often requires reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness 2 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 12:11. It is only through dark days that we learn to walk in the dark places, through the inner light of the Holy Spirit upon the Word deeply held within. When all other light fails us we learn in these anguish, exhaustion and terror filled places, that the Lord is indeed our comfort and our strength.

APPLICATION

Rest upon the Lord and lean heavily upon his Word believer, for in his Word alone is the factual basis for your stability of mind and heart. His Word discloses his heart towards us, and his Plan for us. Rest on these things.

We do not know God's timing for his rescue and must "wait upon the Lord" at times for years, but through those years we daily face the choice of misery or comfort. There will be misery if we wait alone, but there will be comfort to the soul if we wait upon the Lord in fellowship with the Holy Spirit, speaking with Jesus within.

We can have a party in our prison if we have the Holy Spirit and the Lord with us there, and we have his Word on it – He is with us always! Matthew 28:20, Acts 16:25ff.

Notes

Psalm 119:83

"For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; [yet] do I not forget thy statutes."

REFLECTION

Psalm 22:15: *"My strength is dried up like a potsherd"*. The Psalmist perfectly captures the despair of the depressed person in this verse and the one before us in our study. All of us who have walked some tough paths have felt these things ourselves. It is a joy to read these words, and rejoice with my brother from 2600 years ago who felt the emotional draining I have felt at times, and who held to the truth of God's Word as I hold it also. These men are our brothers and they mentor faith and tenacity to us. Let us follow their example and pour our hearts out to the Lord and trust in His timing within his eternal plan. The Lord will rescue us and deliver us into the new path for us to walk.

Psalm 102:1-7

- 1 Hear my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come unto thee.*
- 2 Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call answer me speedily.*
- 3 For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth.*
- 4 My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread.*
- 5 By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin.*
- 6 I am like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert.*
- 7 I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top."*

Even in "smoky" times when all is baffling, confused and worrying I affirm my human nature and its weaknesses and I keep my focus upon the Lord and his promises, and I claim them as my own, and I keep advancing in the truth of his Character and Plan's ultimate victory. We "stand" in his grace, mercy, love and power alone. Romans 5:2, 14:4, Ephesians 6:11-14, Philippians 4:1, 2 Thessalonians 2:15.

APPLICATION

Let us stand before the Lord with all our emotion open to His healing Spirit, and our hands open in worship and readiness for more service. We have no strength in our own bodies, but we have his inner power through the Holy Spirit, and so let us walk in that power alone, for ours fails daily, but the power of God will always pick us up and keep us moving forward towards heaven in joy.

Psalm 119:84

“How many [are] the days of thy servant? When wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?”

REFLECTION

How many [are] the days of thy servant? We are temporary residents of the planet and we need to take into account that all that happens here happens, “under the sun”, and “for a season”. We are but a breath of wind and we are gone, and so are our persecutors. Those who abuse us can appear very powerful at times, and yet they too are but a moment of time and they are gone to face their maker also. The Psalmist feels deeply the assaults of those who hate him and he feels the sadness of injustice at what he faces, and we can sympathize with him in this. Ecclesiastes 3:18ff.

None of us know how long we are here for and none can usefully speculate upon such things, but all of us can live each and every day before the Lord and with a sense of service and worship. That is what we are called to do. Psalm 39:4-5, 89:46-48.

Psalm 90:10-14.

10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

11 Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.

12 So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

13 Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.

14 O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.”

‘When wilt thou execute judgment’: When – *mathay*, how long is it going to be before you judge and remove those who **persecute** or *pursue after me*. We can understand this man as he marches into Babylonian Exile feeling deeply the daily insults of the slave drivers who beat and insulted the captives for sport. This man faces great aggravation, but the answer is the same for him as it is for us – God will deal with evil men and women, and our job is to relax with his timing and his justice, and simply serve as we are called to, trusting in God’s timing and Character.

“Vengeance is mine I will repay” (Romans 12:19). Let us draw comfort from the surety of the Lord’s move against evil men and women, and leave our case in the Lord’s hands. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”. Hebrews 10:31. “Our God is a consuming fire.” Hebrews 12:29. We do not have to worry about justice being done, for it will be; it is just a matter of God’s timing.

APPLICATION

Let us live each day as a day for worship and praise to the Lord our God who has given us this day. Let us leave our enemies in the Lord’s hands, just as we also are in his hands for blessing or judgment.

Let us not think we are “owed” eighty years here, for we may be here for a much shorter time frame and each day the Lord is to be thanked, worshipped, and served with dignity and passion.

Psalm 119:85

“The proud have digged pits for me, which [are] not after thy law.”

REFLECTION

The proud dig pits to ensnare and destroy the godly. Evil men plot, but God plans and His Plans work out in time, men’s plans fail and they fall into judgment. Psalm 7:14-16, 35:7-8, 36:11-12, Proverbs 16:25-28. Men who are full of themselves have little room within for any friendship, nor do they have time for valuing others, for they value only themselves. Such people hate all who excel and receive any reward or approbation. The malice of the enemies of the Psalmist is such that they actually are trying to entrap him and get him into trouble with others as a result.

‘Which [are] not after thy law’: Those who hate the good are always those who hate God, and ignore, hate or contradict the Law of God. Pride goes with active rebellion against the will of God. Those who have tried to entrap and destroy the Psalmist have set themselves against God well beforehand, and in this they seal their fate. Men’s hatred towards God and God’s Law sets them against God well before they are against us. Let us keep this in mind as they insult and abuse us, for as we are the Lord’s servants - they fight God!

APPLICATION

Let us remind ourselves of who the enemy are and who they have declared war upon – they have declared war upon Almighty God. Let us pray for them that abuse us and seek their repentance before their judgment.

Psalm 119:86

“All thy commandments [are] faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me.”

REFLECTION

Faithful – *emunah* means *unshakeable*, something firm and secure and able to be relied upon. God's standards are stable and man errs greatly when he acts in such a way that indicates he does not believe in the Character of the Lord. Morality is a good foundation to stand upon when seeking an answer to prayer from God. The Psalmist has been faithful to the Word, and acknowledges the faithful, truthful, and eternal nature of the Commandments of God. He rests his appeal to God for help upon the faith basis of one who believes and applies the Word of God.

It is always a good place to be when being cross-examined to be found in the truth. In a court case in which I was an expert witness I was asked by the Queens Counsel how I was feeling before what would be two full days of serious cross examination on my evidence. I was able to say to this great lawyer, “I am relaxed, for all we have to do is tell the truth, it is the other people who have to remember the lies they have told, and that will unhinge them.” Two days later I was fine, and the stories of the guilty were starting to unravel, to such an extent that our QC asked one man, “What lie do you wish to stick with for the court Mr X?” The foolish fellow said, “Oh the last statement I made....” The case was won, and it was won because we stood on facts and truth and keeping to the truth. It is on this basis that the Psalmist calls on the Lord his God for help.

They persecute me: *Radaph* means to pursue, to hunt with the purpose of harm. This man has felt hunted like prey. Psalm 7:1-5, 59:3-5. There is deep malice here, and the malice may be from those who would otherwise be this man's friends and fellow captives. The hatred of the enemy is one thing, but the betrayal of a friend is far worse. Psalm 41:9.

Wrongfully – *sheqer* means *pretence, deception*. These people desire the Psalmist's destruction, not just his humiliation. There is grave danger and the appeal to the Lord is direct and short. It is appropriate to pray short prayers when danger is present. I often humorously observe that if some brethren were Peter sinking into the sea they would drown with their long flowery prayers still incomplete. “Lord save me!” is a great prayer in danger! Psalm 70:5, 143:9. Lord - **'help thou me'** – *azar*, to surround - that is come immediately to protect, aid and surround me with assistance.

Psalm 142:2-7 (This has been my prayer through this last year myself.)
 “2 I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble.
 3 When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.
 4 I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.
 5 I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.
 6 Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.
 7 Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.”

APPLICATION

Let us come to the Lord with our desperate need for help openly and bluntly expressed to our God.

Let us stand with honesty and openness before our God – let us examine ourselves, our motives, our desires, and our behaviours, and seek the Lord's path alone through our troubled times.

Notes

Psalm 119:87

“They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts.”

REFLECTION

Almost. James 1:2-4. Romans 5:3-5. God sets his limits upon the plans and power that the enemy has to bring against us. We will not be overcome by those who hate God if we walk with God in love, truth, and godliness. 1 Corinthians 10:13. The enemy may “almost” eat us up, but they are denied final victory by the power of God.

Matthew 10:26-31

*26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.
27 What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.
28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.
29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.
30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.
31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.”*

But I forsook not thy precepts: This affirmation must be able to be made by all who claim the Lord's protection over their path through life. Many want to quote Romans 8:28, without the last half of the verse, for the promise applies only “to those who are called according to your purpose”. Our purpose must be God's, and our desires must be godly to claim God's protection and deliverance.

APPLICATION

Brethren, let us purify our desires so that all we seek is God's glory and grace alone to be seen through our life and witness. If we walk with joy in the Lord's path we walk with victory and we can depend upon every promise being fulfilled.

Psalm 119:88

“Quicken me after thy lovingkindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth.”

REFLECTION

Quicken, to restore him to that point where Divine lovingkindness fills his soul. Psalm 25:10, The Psalmist in today's language would say, “Fire me up Lord!” “Let your power fill me and move me powerfully forward for your glory”. Notice his heart here however, for he doesn't just ask for power to live, but God's power to love and show kindness. He seeks the fruit of the Holy Spirit in power through his life, and by this he proves his family membership. Matthew 7:13-23, Romans 6:21-23, 7:4-6, 9:16-23, Galatians 6:22-26.

Keep - to *concentrate on* the ‘testimony of thy mouth’. This man is focused upon obedience to the Holy Spirit, and in walking closely with God there is the free flow of the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

APPLICATION

Let us always seek power to serve and power to love – for it is the Fruit of the Spirit that draws people to Jesus.

DOCTRINES:**CHRISTIAN LIFE: FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT**

SECTION TWELVE (LAMED)

Psalm 119:89

“For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.”

REFLECTION

For ever: “*Olam*” means *existence beyond imagination* and therefore refers to eternity. The starting point for intelligent discussion of man’s responsibility to his creator is to begin with the understanding of the eternity of God and the temporary nature of this earthly life and brain of ours. When we ground our thinking in the reality of eternity we begin in the right place to understand how secure we are and how important it is to hear and obey the Word. Psalm 90:2, Isaiah 46:10, 1 Peter 1:25, 2 Peter 3:13-18.

APPLICATION

God’s Word is settled forever, for his words come from eternity past, and the plan that is working out in time is already settled and secure and we are within the plan in Christ Jesus. God’s Word is forever – let us rest upon its promises and feel the security that is ours.

Psalm 119:90

“Thy faithfulness *[is]* unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.”

REFLECTION

Faithfulness - ‘*emunah*’ is akin in meaning to ‘settled’ in the previous verse. God’s moral nature means that all generations who rest in the certainties of the Word have his security to uphold them. God is dependable because He is dependable and does not change. It is the stability of God’s Character that makes all he does and says to us dependable. There is no group of people upon the earth who cannot depend upon the Lord if they keep his Word and honour his desires for them. Psalm 89:1-2.

God made the earth and the universe it is suspended within, and the one who made it will fold it up and put it away one day. 2 Peter 3:10ff. We live and move and have our being in the plan of God alone! God thinks and the world holds together! We have no other security than that this universe was made by the Creator God who has a plan that goes beyond space and time, because it comes from beyond space and time.

Micah 7:18-20

“18 Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.

19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

20 Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.”

APPLICATION

Can the creator of the universe look after his creature? Can God look after you here and now? The answer is so obvious when we put it this way, and the Psalmist helps us face this issue and be encouraged in hard places by the wonderful reality that we are serving the Creator of all things.

Psalm 119:91

“They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all *[are]* thy servants.”

REFLECTION

Continue is from the same word - ‘*amad*’, translated ‘abideth’ in verse 90, to *stand, remain, endure*. The word **ordinance** means *decree, edict or ruling*. The phrase, “**continue this day according to thine ordinances**” reminds us that the world that God made is still a created world today, and still under the direction and plan of the creator of space and time. (Genesis 1:1, Psalm 148:5-6, Jeremiah 5:22). We are in the hands and plan of the Almighty Creator of space and time! All the elements of this vast universe are “servants” of the Lord God who made them.

Psalm 148:4-6

*“4 Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.
5 Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created.
6 He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.”*

We also are to be his servants – but for us it is by free will choice each day. The stars must obey him, and one day they will fail one by one, for time will end, but we will not – for we have an eternal destiny with God beyond time and space. The phrase “for ever and ever” is the phrase that captures in the Hebrew the concept of “until time ends”. We are told the stars will fail in the Tribulation Period, (Revelation 6:13, 8:12), then finally. 2 Peter 3:9-13, Revelation 21:1ff. We live beyond space and time into eternity through the work of Jesus for us. John 3:15-36, 10:10-17.

1 John 5:11-15

*“11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.
12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.
13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.
14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:
15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”*

APPLICATION

We serve the creator of space and time. The very categories of our thinking are creations of Almighty God. Our concept of God is way too small most times we pray. Let us meditate for a few seconds (no longer lest our minds fall apart at the thought) on the fact that God made the present space-time universe and we are part of it.

This universe emerged from beyond space and time in eternity where God dwells, and all will be folded up and put away, but we will enter eternity with God. Think upon the greatness of the Plan of God and rest in his provisions for you here and now.

Psalm 119:92-93

“Unless thy law [had been] my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction. I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me.”

REFLECTION

Perished The Psalmist reflects upon a reality that has exercised my mind over recent years as I have faced overwhelming pressures, that unless I had loved and drawn strength from the Word of God I would have gone mad and/or died. If the Psalmist (and I) had not been stabilised by God’s Holy Word in our heart and mind in Holy Spirit power our minds would have unravelled. The Joy of the Lord alone has been my strength in darkest days. No man or woman has been my strength, for they are not there in the deep and dark places of the night when anguish grips the soul, but the promises of God’s Word remain secure and have been my life raft, as they were the Psalmists. They are much more than a barren life raft of course – they are joy and rejoicing. Isaiah 61:3, Nehemiah 8:10.

Unless: The narrow line between sanity and madness under pressure is held by the Word of God as applied by the Holy Spirit into the very heart of the soul and spirit of man. The words on the page alone do not strengthen, but the spiritual power of the Word of God does. John 10:10-17. God’s gift to us is the gift of defeating all our anguish eternally. It is the gift of the Holy Spirit’s amazing ministries that empower and direct us beyond space and time and into eternity right now. It is God’s power and his truth that is our guide for life beyond time and space, and our guide for all the hassles we meet before we leave this temporary planet.

My delights: It is joy that the Lord gives to the child he has bought with the precious blood of Jesus. If we do not know that joy in the heart, in the midst of greatest adversity, then we need to pause and pray longer, and go deeper into his Word in the filling of the Holy Spirit, for JOY is the result of all fellowship with God. The Psalmist has been stripped bare by the Babylonians and is marching into captivity in which he will die, but he knows the peace of God that passes understanding and he has joy that their chains cannot erode. Philippians 4:7. We need to reflect often upon the gracious gifts of God – for they will bring life back (quicken our spirit and soul) in darkest places.

Philippians 4: 4

*“4. Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.
5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.
6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.
7 And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

9 *Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.*

10 *But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.*

11 *Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

12 *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.*

13 *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."*

APPLICATION

Let us heed the words of St Paul and rejoice in the Lord as the Psalmist also does.

Let us rejoice in the God of our Salvation – for he is maker of heaven and earth and we are safe in his eternal plan.

Psalm 119:94

"I [am] thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts."

REFLECTION

Sought – *darash*, to *resort to, seek, to enquire after* the commandments or statutes of God. Through the reality of the promises of God's Holy Word, the Psalmist had assurance that he belonged totally to God, and so he knew that his worries were not his own, but were Gods, for he was God's and all he had was God's. Psalm 86:1-5, 1 Peter 1:18-22. He applied the reality of his relationship with God by wholehearted devotion to the Word and study of it often. He sought the truths of God's Word as diligently as a hunter chases the game animal that is his family's food.

Save - *yasha'*, means to be *open, unrestricted and free, to be safe*. As we have seen a number of times in this Psalm, the psalmist cries out aloud his prayer for deliverance. It is the encouragement to us all, for we can all find ourselves in places that require the Lord's deliverance alone. He seeks God's door to open here, as I do this day also. Like the Psalmist I do not know when the door will open, but I know the power of the Lord my God in whose company I am "trapped".

The Psalmist feels the entrapment of his situation but he relaxes in the company of His God and seeks the Lord's timing for his deliverance. It is God's precepts/plans that this man seeks, and it is the Lord's path alone that I seek from the place I find myself in, for there is no other safe and blessed path.

APPLICATION

Lord we seek your path for our lives this day. Father God, there is no other deliverance that works out in time and for eternity other than your deliverance. Save us Lord, Your way, your time, and for your glory eternally. Amen.

Psalm 119:95

"The wicked have waited for me, to destroy me: [but] I will consider thy testimonies."

REFLECTION

Wicked is in the plural (and they *have* waited), giving the sense that a number of people have been or are involved. They **wait** - *gavah* being to *bind together* in a gang of thugs to abuse the Psalmist. This man has faced great evil in the past, and even as he marches to Babylon the thugs are still present amongst the captives and amongst their guards. Evil men remain evil unless they are convicted by the Holy Spirit. John 16:8-11.

The Psalmist faces the consistent malice of evil men and he knows they seek to "destroy" him. They are evil indeed, but he faces their threats by meditating on God's Plan for his life, for if God has a plan for him, then no men will stop God's Plan, and if they fight against him they will be fighting against God. This is the perspective that transforms situations, when we see that the only issue for us is to orient ourselves into the Plan of God, for then those who oppose us fight God himself! Psalm 10:8-18.

Psalm 27:1-6

"1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

3 Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.

4 *One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.*

5 *For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.*

6 *And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD."*

As we face adversity, seeing the power of God over us and around us, we see that those who fight against us may plot and plan all they wish, but if we walk prayerfully we walk safely through the midst of them. God's Plan will work out and we have a part to play in that plan and the Holy Spirit will guide us and empower us so that that part is played to the end!

APPLICATION

Let us celebrate the power of God in the Plan for us, and live in his power as we ought to live this day.

Notes

Psalm 119:96

"I have seen an end of all perfection: [but] thy commandment [is] exceeding broad.

REFLECTION

End of all perfection - The claims of men to perfection and completeness are all found over time to be fraudulent or foolish. Many claim to be able to achieve great things in this life by their schemes, plans and techniques, but they all sicken and die one day. There is no way to live this life except through the power of the Holy Spirit. The psalmist reflects upon the many claims of many men that he has seen all fail over time. None of their schemes have worked out through time, but God's Word always "works" in the soul and spirit. Psalm 19:7-8, Romans 7:7-14.

'Thy commandment [is] exceeding broad' is his strong statement of comparison to the claims of foolish and fraudster men. They have claimed to provide a way to live that works, but they have delivered nothing, whereas the work of God always provided a place of freedom and service that works and delivers. God's path always opens into an area of service and opportunity that blesses the individual and all around them. Matthew 7:13-23.

APPLICATION

God's path may be confined and "narrow" at times, but the application of his Holy Word always opens up our lives to spacious places to live and bless God and mankind. The Lord opens the door to places that bless now and eternally.

DOCTRINE:

BIBLE – INERRANCY

SECTION THIRTEEN (MEM)

Psalm 119:97

“O how love I thy law! it [is] my meditation all the day.”

REFLECTION

How love I thy law: The Psalmist just bursts out with this praise again and again, and this phrase, or those very like it punctuate the long Psalm. Remember it was a psalm sung in sections daily through the long march to Babylon. It is often good to cry out to the Lord about how much we love his person, His Word, and his indwelling Holy Spirit. How often ought we tell a loved one they are loved? Isn't it a silly question, for all lovers will openly and often express their love for their loved one and so will we. As Scroggie says of this verse, “Love promotes thoughts, and thoughts produce love”.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9

“3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.

4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”

Psalm 1:1-3

“1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”

God's Word was to be central to the life of the nation Israel, and it was the loss of this centrality that produced the spirit of rebellion that led to the Exile. The last kings hated the prophets and hated the Word and so they rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar because they had rebelled against God for many years before. The evil last king Zedekiah even cut up Jeremiah's words to him with his pen knife and fed the prophetic word into his fire. Jeremiah 36:22-24. What a contrast these words are to the emotion and thought of the Psalmist as he faces the truth of the Exile and embraces their only hope – God's Plan for them as revealed in his Holy Word.

All day at every hour of the day and night the Psalmist meditates upon the Word if he is awake, for its precious promises are his hope, and are his sole ground of mental stability. King Zedekiah thought that by cutting up the words of the prophet and burning them he had eliminated the judgment against him, but he was wrong – fatally wrong. The Word remained, and even today it is our strength, and we are wise if we meditate upon it at all times in the day and night.

APPLICATION

All believers face the choice that those of the Exile generation faced. Do we deny, destroy or distract ourselves from the Word of God like the evil king and his doomed court, or do we meditate upon it as our hope, our light and our life? Let us passionately embrace the choice of the Psalmist.

Notes

Psalm 119:98

“Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they [are] ever with me.

REFLECTION

They [are] ever with me’. The psalmist may have a double meaning with this statement, for the wisdom of the Word within is forever, for the treasury of the doctrines of God’s Word are with us in eternity, and are our only possession from time taken into eternity. We receive eternal rewards in eternity for our service in time, but they await us in eternity, whereas the treasures of the Word stay with us through time and enter eternity with us. Also the meaning in this verse may refer to our enemies, for they are “forever” if we define that as “until time ends”, and so it may be the Psalmist is making a very interesting contrast between the two things mentioned here. The treasure of spirituality is eternal “forever”, but our enemies are only with us until time ends “forever”.

Our enemies are with us until time ends, and evil and sin are remarkably persistent on this fallen earth, for even after one thousand years of perfect reign upon the earth evil men and women rebel against the Lord. There will be enemies of the Cross till the very last moment when the last one joins Satan in the Lake of Fire. Revelation 20:7-15. They remain there, contained in some way even in eternity, Revelation 21:7-8, 27. The choices of time are eternal; for once life is given by God to man it is eternal life, and has only two destinies – blessing or judgment. The Psalmist encourages and mentors to us all the choice of eternal blessedness.

Enemies will always abound in this fallen world, for man has free will and that may always be expressed in opposition to the will of the Lord for that individual. Wisdom from the Word always will deliver us from the paths of evil men and women, for the truths of God’s Word provide good counsel to keep us from evil pathways and from the traps evil people set for us. **Proverbs 2:1-20.** There will always be seducers from the path of God around in this life, but a mind garrisoned by the truth of the Word will be kept secure and strong against all temptations. James 1:22-25.

Colossians 3:15-17

*“15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.
16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.
17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”*

My brother Brian Huggett in his Commentary on this Psalm reminds us that for every solid advance in the fellowship of Jesus and the filling of the Holy Spirit in time there is eternal reward for the believer. Every battle won against the enemies of the Cross is a good investment for blessing in time, but also for eternity. For Spirit filled service all believers win eternal rewards, spoken of as Crowns, and these are with us in eternity also.

Brian Notes, “The crowns spoken of in the N.T. are eternal rewards for faithfulness, in exercising self-control (1 Corinthians 9:24-27), for faithfulness in suffering (1 Peter 5:4), for faithfulness under trial (James 1:12, Revelation 2:10), for faithful testimony (2 Timothy 4:8) and for faithful service (1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20, Philippians 4:1). All of these are the results of the wisdom of knowing and loving God.” Brian Huggett – first Edition of this Volume on Psalm 119.

APPLICATION

Let us rejoice in the Word, for every moment of our rejoicing in the Word is a moment of victory over personal temptation and against the assaults and schemes of evil people. Let us rejoice in the Word, for in our praise and worship we garrison our soul against sin and evil and we equip our spirit for eternity.

Psalm 119:99

“I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies [are] my meditation.”

REFLECTION

Understanding or *sakal* means to be *level headed, circumspect*. As we are taught by the Word of God through the indwelling ministries of the Holy Spirit, and apply the Word into daily life, so we are made wise by the Holy Spirit, and our wisdom will always surpass that of those who depend upon the teachings of men. We rest upon the revelation of God and it is always powerful and significant above all things. Deuteronomy 4:1-9, Jeremiah 8:8-9.

For thy testimonies [are] my meditation: The wise believer simply fills their mind with the testimonies of the Lord for them, for in the Word there is wise counsel and solid advice for all aspects of this life. So often in the ancient world the teachers would have their students meditate upon their own “wise words”, and so the student would never rise above their master, for they always meditated upon their master’s words. God’s path to spiritual maturity is different, for we are urged to meditate upon the Word of God, not any commentary of man, no matter how godly that man. 2 Timothy 3:13-17.

APPLICATION

Let us feed upon the Word of God every day, for in its counsel we keep safe, and the Lord blesses us beyond the wisest words of men. Let us lift up the Word of God, not ever the words of men about God. Man may sing of the glory of God's Word and encourage us by their songs and teaching, but let us never worship their words, but only lift up the Word of God.

Notes

Psalm 119:100

"I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts."

REFLECTION

Understand is from the Hebrew *biyn*, meaning to *discern*. The emphasis here is comprehension of the Plan of God through the Holy Spirit's instruction upon the Word, whereas in the previous verse, *sakal* described the spiritual and eternal benefits of understanding scripture. Once again there may be a double meaning/significance of the word "ancients" here, as we saw in the last verse a double meaning. The first meaning may be simply to the unfolding nature of revelation, for as each generation unfolded, so did biblical revelation.

Each generation of Israel received more from the Lord and so were even more blessed than those going before. We take for granted the book of Isaiah, but before 680 BC no-one had it. We love Jeremiah, but he had not sent his book to Babylon until around 570 BC, and Daniel did not put his pen down until around 534 BC. The Psalmist rejoices in what he knows, and sees that he is more blessed than even David, for he has so much revelation more than even David had. The apostle James captures this excitement later as he reflects upon the "much more" revelation that he has after the Lord's ministry and other apostle's words in the Spirit. 1 Peter 1:10-12, 2 Peter 3:14-16.

The second meaning of this word "ancients" could be simply older men around the Psalmist. One of the joys of the work of the Holy Spirit is that we don't need to wait until we are old before the Spirit works upon us, for he indwells and teaches all who are open to his filling. Acts 2:1-4. Many old grey heads are actually spiritual babies, for they have never opened their lives to the ministries of the Holy Spirit. As this younger Psalmist walks into captivity he rejoices that he has experienced the power of God through the Word in his life and he has greater stability than all the old men of his day who have not received the Word. He hears, believes, and applies the Word and so he walks in stability and more wisdom than all the old men whose rejection of the Word has proved them fools.

James 1:19-25

*19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:
 20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.
 21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.
 22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.
 23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:
 24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.
 25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."*

APPLICATION

Let us rejoice in the wisdom we have in the Word, through the ministries of the Holy Spirit in our life. Let us open ourselves to the Word's conviction and allow the Holy Spirit free reign with our lives.

Psalm 119:101

"I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word."

REFLECTION

I have refrained – *kala abstain*, to *renounce* all forms of evil. The psalmist has not been half-hearted, but absolutely determined to live a holy life. Philippians 3:12-14. He has seen those who were half hearted die or suffer greatly in the two invasions of the land to the date of this large exile of the intelligentsia of the land. 2 Kings 24:12-16.

The Psalmist sees that by actively resisting all temptations to sin and evil he has kept his soul and his body. He and the others will only see over the next ten years that the Exile has indeed saved their lives, for all who “escaped” this major exile would die in the final battles around the land and pitiful few would go into captivity the last time Jerusalem falls. Jeremiah 52:28-30. Those who refrained their feet from evil will be delivered through the Exile. Proverbs 1:10-19.

The Psalmist does all this so that he might **keep** – *shamar, guard* the Scriptures in his soul. He has seen that only with the Word deep in his soul is he able to face the trials of the days in which he lives. We do not select the age into which we are born and the place of service into which we are born. The Lord has placed us into a space-time context in accordance with his plan for our life. Have you ever reflected upon this fact before? As we “guard” the word in our heart so we receive the blessing of the Lord into our hearts and his guidance to walk in our assigned place of service and worship.

Titus 2:11-14

*“11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,
12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;
13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;
14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”*

APPLICATION

Let us resist all sin and evil and so stand for truth in the midst of a perverse generation – for we have been placed into this time of history to serve the Lord and witness to truth here. Let us walk with the Word deep within and the Holy Spirit guiding our steps along the path.

Notes

Psalms 119:102-103

“I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! [yea, sweeter] than honey to my mouth!”

REFLECTION

The Psalmist recognizes the inner teacher that the Holy Spirit has been through the ages to God’s people. He recognizes that God has been working within to teach him as he has been reading the words of scripture. He gives glory to God for the grace received and the protection he has enjoyed. God has taught him and the Lord our God through the Holy Spirit has taught us all. Praise the Lord for his provision. We have the Word of God and the Holy Spirit of God to apply truth directly into our heart and mind. Ephesians 4:20-24, 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

1 John 2:24-28

*“24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.
25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.
26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.
27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.
28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.”*

The sweetness of the Word to the soul is the meditation of the Psalmist as he reflects further upon the legacy of the Word within. The Word is like honey in the mouth. This was the sweetest thing to the ancients and expressed the healthful and wonderful blessings that the Word brings to a life. Psalm 63:3-7, Proverbs 3:17, 8:11, 24:13-14.

Psalm 19:7-11

*7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.
 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.
 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.
 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.
 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward."*

APPLICATION

God's Word is sweetness to the soul in difficult places, and is fresh and a constant source of refreshment to overcome the tiredness and exhaustion we can feel in the Angelic Conflict.

Psalm 119:104

"Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way."

REFLECTION

Through thy precepts: From, or *out of* God's Word. We receive understanding of where we are and what we are to do only from God's Word. There is no other trustworthy source of direction and explanation as we advance through this life. In God's Word alone is there a reliable guide to this life, for its context is eternity and the Plan of God for Mankind that comes from that side of space and time. It is only God who can make meaning of our path, for He alone has decreed the beginning and the end, and in his plan alone do we have any certainties at all.

To love the Lord and value the Lord's instruction to us means we will hate all that opposes the truth. If we love truth we will hate falsehood! If we love the people of God we will hate the enemy who tries to destroy the people of God. Hatred of Satan and his host is bone fide for believers, indeed it is a fruit of understanding the Word of God. Proverbs 8:13, Amos 5:14-15.

Romans 12:9-16

*9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.
 10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;
 11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;
 12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;
 13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.
 14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.
 15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.
 16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits."*

"Belief in God and in the first verse of the Bible is sufficient truth upon which to found one's life. All other truth is based upon that clear and dogmatic statement; *"In the beginning God created heaven and earth"*. That statement refutes *all* other philosophies or religious thought: -

- It opposes atheism, the concept that no God exists.
- It opposes polytheism, the concept of many gods.
- It opposes evolution.
- It opposes pantheism, the worship of many gods.
- It opposes fatalism for it describes the sovereignty of God and God's will.
- It opposes naturalism, which states that natural or physical laws are sufficient to explain the universe without divine revelation.
- It opposes rationalism and empiricism because the verse requires supernatural revelation.
- It opposes human works or legalism, for men are dependant on God, not God on men." (BRIAN HUGGETT)

"There is a way that seems right to a man but the ends thereof are death". Proverbs 14:12.

APPLICATION

Let us praise the Lord for all his goodness towards us, for his goodness never fails and his Word keeps us safe from evil. Let us also be unashamed of our hatred of Satan and his host and their evil work.

We pray for the deceived lost, but we hate evil and we hate it with all our heart.

DOCTRINE

BIBLE: INSPIRATION

SECTION FOURTEEN (NUN)

Psalm 119:105

“Thy word [is] a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

REFLECTION

Lamp unto our feet speaks of a glimmering small oil lamp lighting only each step. Today we would refer to this light as a flash-light, as it shows just the immediate vicinity. The Word is just that for us, showing us the next step to take at times, and nothing else. At times faith is very much a step by step process, but it is always a step into light each time. At no point is biblical faith a “leap in the dark”; that is nonsense from Soren Kierkegaard an existential philosopher and one of many “nut bar” theologians. I make no apology for my contempt for his viewpoint, for it is anti-biblical.

God never calls believers to “leap into darkness”, only ever to walk in the light of the Holy Spirit’s illumination upon the Word. God’s Word is light; the enemy’s tricks lead to darkness. “God is light and in Him is no darkness at all”. 1 John 1:5. God’s Word always brings light, clarity and direct orders. If there is confusion and darkness there is not teaching of the Word by Holy Spirit filled people. 1 Corinthians 14:33, James 3:16. Light is a “fruit” of the Holy Spirit’s work, and darkness and confusion is a fruit of evil workers. God’s work is characterized by light. Proverbs 6:23, 2 Peter 1:19.

A light unto my path This light/torch is more than a glimmering lamp, but a strong light of a flaming torch that enables the one carrying it to see for a number of meters around about them. When we need to see the context of our sphere of action, then the Holy Spirit will illuminate the path ahead and around. This may not be all the time, indeed it is rare, for the battlefield of the Angelic Conflict requires stealth by the Lord’s soldiers, and the small lamp is most common for the commando actions we mostly fight. When we need the flaming torch however, then the Lord will ensure it is provided.

Such times are few in our earthly pilgrimage, as this sort of light flashing about us brings in the enemy’s fire upon us. Such light is to get our bearings and then work step by step again. We are not here to sight see, so the light of the Word is never a flood light, for that is not appropriate for a battlefield, and that is what this world is! We need to remember, the light of God’s Word is always for a purpose, and that purpose is to help us fight as the soldiers we are called to be. Psalm 18:28-29, Ephesians 6:10-19.

Ephesians 5:8-13

*8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:
9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)
10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.
11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.
12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.
13 But all things that are reprovèd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.”*

APPLICATION

Turn the light on brethren. Open the Word of God and study to show yourself approved before God. Apply the Word right into your part of the battlefield and serve the Lord in battle, in the light the Word shines on your area of operation.

Psalm 119:106

“I have sworn, and I will perform [it], that I will keep thy righteous judgments.”

REFLECTION

To **swear** - *shaba'* is to *take an oath*, to make a promise, to *pledge* oneself to a course of action. To swear an oath before the Lord was a very serious matter and was not excused lightly. Leviticus 19:12, Numbers 30:2ff. If any vow or oath was taken it was to be kept, and the Psalmist has taken a solemn oath to keep/guard the Word of God, and he has remained determined to keep that oath. He has performed his oath to date and will continue to do so, for the Word is righteous and he is determined to be righteous with God by keeping its provisions. Psalm 56:9-12, 66:13-14.

Romans 12:1-2,

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

Righteous judgments of God. God’s judgements as *accurate, faithful, and true* and through the filling of the Holy Spirit the Psalmist is also going to be transformed by the Word and be like this also in all his dealings. The standard for

our behaviour is "Christ like behaviour". We are to be like him and that is always the result of the work of the Holy Spirit within. Ephesians 4:13.

APPLICATION

God's standard is impossible to meet in human strength, but we have much more than human strength, we have the power of the Holy Spirit to guide, guard, and teach us. Let us advance in this life in Christ-likeness through the work of the Spirit within.

Psalm 119:107

"I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word."

REFLECTION

Afflicted – *anah*, means among other things, to be dismayed, humbled, made to feel inadequate. All deep suffering makes us feel inadequate for the task before us, and we are always inadequate in our own strength. The good news of the Holy Spirit's work within us is that our inadequacies are the Spirit's opportunities as we walk in the filling of the Spirit. The Spirit alone brings life, and it is spiritual life through the Word. Psalm 143:11.

Ephesians 5:15-20

*15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,
 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
 17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.
 18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;
 19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;
 20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where [is] the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." Jeremiah 6:16.

*"For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: **and ye would not**" - Isaiah 30:15.*

APPLICATION

The challenge we have is to walk in the Spirit and obey the Word. Let us not be like those who "would not" obey. Two paths only exist through this life – God's path for us, or the path of rejection of God's will – blessing or cursing.

Psalm 119:108

"Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me thy judgments."

REFLECTION

'The freewill offerings of my mouth' are the spontaneous, unplanned, honest expressions of love and gratitude from a heart filled with the knowledge of God's love. God seeks the sacrifice of praise and worship from a loving heart. It is what a friend of mine calls the "attitude of gratitude" that the Lord seeks from us. Hebrews 13:5. Backsliding is removed by confession of sin and the sacrifice of praise and worship. 1 John 1:5-10.

Hosea 14:1-2, 9.

*1 O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.
 2 Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.
 9 Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein."*

Teach is from the Hebrew *lamad*, which means to *learn*, to *teach*, to *be taught*. The Psalmist recognizes the truth again and again through this long Psalm, that it is the constant learning of the truths of God's Word that we need to keep us stable and settled in our spirit when we face maximum pressures. It is the instruction, correction and encouragement of the Lord's Word through the indwelling Holy Spirit that will always refresh the soul and spirit, and restore the flagging strength of this all too weak body.

2 Corinthians 5:1-10

*“1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.
 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:
 3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.
 4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.
 5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.
 6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:
 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight.)
 8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.
 9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.
 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”*

APPLICATION

Let us offer up the sacrifice of praise and worship this day and forever. The Lord is our Saviour, The Holy Spirit our teacher, our guide, and our comforter through the dark and the bright days here. Let us praise his holy name.

Psalms 119:109-110

“My soul [is] continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law. The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts.”

REFLECTION

My soul [is] continually in my hand: **Soul** – *nephesh* is a reference to the living breathing substance of a man and is a reference to a man’s life. The Psalmist lives in constant danger on this march, but he recognizes that he has placed his life firmly in God’s hands. Like many marches of captives the guards could be brutal and cruel, and they had total power over life and death. If they wanted to kill a captive they would and did, just to increase the terror and compliance amongst the survivors. There is great pressure and terrible threat in every waking moment, and even sleep does not provide rest from danger as snakes inhabit that land, and the guards could come at any time and “punish” any captive.

There was also the danger from false brethren who betrayed their fellows and abused them worse than the guards. Paul faced similar pressures. 2 Corinthians 11:23-31. Both Paul and the Psalmist recognize that they are not in the hands of “the fates”, nor in the hands of those who seek their life, but in the hands of the one who gave them life, and will guard their lives until he is ready to take them home to heaven. Romans 1:16-21, 8:36-39, 2 Timothy 4:6-8.

Job 13:4 - *“Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in mine hand?”*
Judges 12:3 - *“And when I saw that ye delivered [me] not, I put my life in my hands, and passed over against the children of Ammon...”*,
2 Timothy 1:12 - *“For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”*

I do not forget God’s **law** – *torah*. He **has not** and **will not** forget the Law of God. This is the commitment of the Psalmist to the Lord, and it is this daily dogged determination that keeps him. As he keeps/guards the Word in his heart, so the Lord guards his soul and keeps him plodding onwards on the narrow path for his life. It is this daily and dogged attitude that keeps us moving forward in hard days. It is this commitment to the Word that has kept me sane in mentally exhausting nights, and even as I tap out these words this morning, while it is still dark, I rejoice in the power of the Word to uplift my flagging spirit and bring rejoicing. “The Joy of the Lord is my strength”, Nehemiah 8:10, and that joy is known and expressed in the Word of God.

To **err** – *ta’ah* is to *vacillate*, to stray from a given path, and this sums up the main danger to the believer of straying from the narrow path of God for them through this life. Matthew 7:13-23. The enemy are always about, and they lay snares to catch and destroy our witness, but if we stick to the Holy Spirit cleared path directly ahead of us we are safe.

In war the engineers go ahead of the army and clear the enemy mine fields and then mark a cleared path through the mines. Any man who wanders off the cleared path will be blown to pieces, but those who stick to the path that has been cleared are safe and secure, through the work of the engineers. Just so it is with us, for the Holy Spirit clears the path ahead of us and if we walk with him we are safe. Psalm 16:11, 27:11, 139:3, 142:3, Proverbs 3:6, Ephesians 5:18.

APPLICATION

The enemy will always be laying mine fields for us, but we do not have to clear the entire mine field and be distracted from the task before us. We are called to serve the Lord and advance in his narrow “cleared” path, and ignore

the enemy's distractions to the side of the true path. Let us simply do the work the Lord has called us to, and push aside all distractions from the path of God. It is not our path we are to walk, but Gods, and we walk in God's Holy Spirit provided light and power, not our own.

Psalm 119:111

“Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they [are] the rejoicing of my heart.”

REFLECTION

“An heritage for ever” is in effect an eternal possession. The things of time last for time, and they perish with this old and worn out creation. 2 Corinthians 4:16, Hebrews 1:11, James 1:11. Only the things of God last into eternity, and that is our destiny, and the things that are to occupy our minds are to be eternal things. The first thing that we can take into eternity is the truth of God's Word, and as we fill our hearts and minds with the truths of God's Word so we stabilize our spirit and build up assets within that will go with us into eternity. Let the Word dwell within you “richly”, Colossians 3:16, 1 Timothy 6:17.

Jeremiah 10:10-13

“10 But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.

11 Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.

12 He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.

13 When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.”

Heritage - *nachal* does not only mean some thing we become heir to, but anything we gain possession of by grace in this case. The things that the Lord has given us in Christ Jesus are beyond measure, and while we identify at least thirty six things that the Lord has done for us at the point of salvation, this is only the beginning. Proverbs 22:1-4, Ephesians 1:7, 2:7, 3:8, 16, Philippians 4:19. We need to know and rejoice daily in the riches of his grace towards us.

They are the rejoicing of our heart. My favourite verse, Nehemiah 8:10, comes back to encourage and strengthen me. The Joy of the Lord is my strength!

APPLICATION

Oh my brother and sister in the precious Lord Jesus Christ, let us stand with the Psalmist and rejoice in the Lord, for in praise and worship is our strength. We are blessed indeed, and so let the people of the Lord say so often through each and every day!

Notes

Psalm 119:112

“I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, [even unto] the end.”

REFLECTION

The Psalmist adopts the attitude of worship, holding his hands out to the Lord to give glory and receive blessing. He not only holds his hands out in worship, he opens his heart and puts his emotional being out there to the Lord also. In todays' psychological language he makes himself vulnerable before the Lord, holding nothing back from God. He faces the Lord and in everything he does he expresses his confidence that the Lord will deliver and bring him through the dark paths to the light of blessing and further service.

He does not see the captivity as the end, but as the beginning of a new phase of God's plan for his life. He is determined to serve right through to the end of this earthly life, for that is not the end, for he is destined for heaven, and it is God's “end” point he seeks – and that is the very throne room of heaven. Acts 7:55-56.

Psalm 141:1-4

“1 Lord, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.

2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

3 Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.

4 Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.”

APPLICATION

Let us focus on our true end point, and that is not in space and time, but in eternity with the Creator of the Universe, and our Saviour and Lord, who loves us and gave himself for us that we might be with Him forever.

Notes

DOCTRINE:

CHRISTIAN LIFE – GIFTS GIVEN AT SALVATION

CHRISTIAN LIFE – GIFTS: SPIRITUAL GIFTS

SALVATION: REDEMPTION

SECTION FIFTEEN (SAMECH)

Psalm 119:113-114

“I hate [vain] thoughts: but thy law do I love. Thou [art] my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word.”

REFLECTION

The word **thought** - *se'eph* means *divided*, being of *two minds*, indecisive thinking = vain or worthless. Without the Holy Spirit's teaching into our soul and spirit the thoughts of all men, even the most noble and smart, are just “vanity” and foolishness. Psalm 94:11, Jeremiah 4:14, James 4:7-8.

The “vain philosophies” of man are of no value when we face the real issue of our life and death. Colossians 2:8. In contrast to the thoughts of men there is the truth of Almighty God. The Law of God is perfect and stable and the rock upon which we can build our sanity and our powerful foundation for service and worship as we walk through this short life.

Isaiah 55:6-9

*“6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:
7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.
9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”*

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all [men] liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man [is] unstable in all his ways”. James 1:5-7.

The Word is our shield, the great protective shield that will quench all the doubts and fears that Satan fires at us like arrows through each day. Ephesians 6:16. The challenge is to hold the shield up high above our head and catch the enemy's arrows before they bite into our flesh. We will always have doubts and fears arrive, but with the shield of faith held high above our heads we can quench the fire arrows that assault us. The Lord's Word is also our “hiding place”. Psalm 32:7, 91:1-2. The Lord's sweet Promises from his Word are our strong tower, our fortress into which we can always flee and be safe, for God will always honour his Word.

Psalm 3:3 *“You O Lord are a shield to me, the glory and the lifter of my head.”*

Psalm 84:10-12

*“10 For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.
11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.
12 O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.”*

APPLICATION

Let us rejoice in the strong tower of God's provision for us, and his promises to us. We can depend upon our Lord, for we are his and he will never let us down.

Psalm 119:115

“Depart from me, ye evildoers: for I will keep the commandments of my God.”

REFLECTION

Depart from me. Evil men and women will always hover about and attack when they can, 1 Peter 5:8. We can only rebuke the enemy and press on with the Lord's plan for our life. We can only rebuke all evil with a word and keep moving away from evil men and women. Psalm 6:8, 26:5, 9, 139:19. Let us select our company carefully and move away from evil at every opportunity we can.

To keep – *natsar* is to guard, to maintain the integrity of the commandments of God. To keep the commandments of God is to keep our own soul in the process, for we are all kept by God's provisions and power only. We keep the Word of the Lord, but He keeps us secure as a result. We guard the Word within and He guards us without limit! The commandments of the Lord are “not grievous”; they are life and health. John 15:10-17.

“...be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” Ephesians 6:10-11.

APPLICATION

Let us keep the Word as treasure in the soul, for in our obedience to the Word of God we keep our soul and body safe in this world. Let us select our company carefully and follow after truth, hating all error and evil.

Notes

Psalm 119:116

“Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope.”

REFLECTION

Uphold vs.107. It is an acknowledgement of dependency on God’s power, for we have no power to keep ourselves safe in the Angelic Conflict. I often reflect to those I counsel, that I cannot understand how pagans resist suicide, for what hope can they have in this world, facing certain death, when they have no anchor for their soul that is rooted in eternity? Our anchor of meaning must be outside the boat of space and time! God alone can uphold our spiritual strength, and keep our weak bodies going in difficult places, for it is God’s power alone that keeps and delivers.

Isaiah 40:25-31

*“25 To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.
 26 Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.
 27 Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?
 28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.
 29 He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.
 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:
 31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint”.*

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”. **2 Timothy 3:16-17.**

Let me not be ashamed: The prayer of the Psalmist is my earnest prayer this day and every day as I face great pressure that there is no human solution to. The really important issues of this life are all in this category of course; for there is no human solution to all the “big issues” man faces in this life. The only solution to our deepest problems is in fellowship with our Lord, our God and our Saviour. Also reflect brother/sister, what is actually “big” to God?

“Look to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else.” **Isaiah 45:22**

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world..... And this is the promise which he has promised us, even eternal life”. 1 John 2:15, 25.

APPLICATION

There is only shame in the thoughts and plans of men for all man can do is temporal, and all man is doing will end one day with death, but those who do the will of the Lord will live forever with Him. Let us be focused upon eternity, not time, and God’s opinion of us, not men’s.

Psalm 119:117

“Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.”

REFLECTION

Hold thou me up. We must ask ourselves daily, are we standing in God’s power, or trusting our own? It is the power of God alone that must hold us up, for any human strength we have will fail us at some point. I rose very early this morning, as pain from arthritis in my fingers made sleep flee from me. I warmed my swollen joints and began to worship and tap away at this study, and my joints have eased through the last three hours of the night. I do not miss the sleep, for the joy of the Lord strengthens me and I can catch up on sleep later tonight. I want the Lord to lift me up and restore my strength, for I need his power, not anything the chemist can give me. Psalm 17:5, 71:6, 14, 73:21-28.

I shall be safe: This affirmation is the confident assertion of all who love God and seek his power only in their life. I shall be safe, for I walk with God and the power of the Holy Spirit and the angels is around me. I am safe because the Lord’s path is my path, and the Lord’s power is my power. God is able to make me stand. Romans 14:4, 1 Peter 1:5.

I will have respect and pay attention to the provisions and principles of God alone. It is the Lord’s Word alone that is my strength and my song. It is the Lord alone who is my secure rock of strength and stability. I will respect and worship no man or institution, and give my power to no other, for the Lord alone is my strength.

Isaiah 26:1-4,

“In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah. We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength”.

Jude 24-25

*“24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,
25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”*

APPLICATION

Let us rest our stability and our power in the Lord alone – for in the Lord alone is strength that lasts forever.

Psalm 119:118

“Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes: for their deceit [is] falsehood.”

REFLECTION

‘Trodden down’ sounds rather an extreme translation of the Hebrew *salah* – to hang up, or to weigh *in the balance*. The extremity of the translation is appropriate however, for the Lord weighs all the motivation of men and they are either on his path and fulfilling his plan or they are lost. I have often said to my students, “The plan of God is like a great bulldozer, and we are either in the cab with God, travelling his way, or we are under the bulldozer”. God is working his purposes out, and we have no other place to be than either with Him or against him.

To **err** – *shagah*, is *to stray* from a prescribed way, here it is to transgress God’s statutes, and it is described as deceit and falsehood. It is put this way because that is what wandering off from the path of God is. To “err” is to ignore God’s holy demands, and even more, to actively reject and oppose them. It is to deceive yourself about reality, for you have failed to see that you are a creature in need of instruction from your creator; you need a Saviour and Lord. John 3:16-36, Acts 16:31. It is falsehood to live in such a way to deny the holy demands of your God and it is culpable falsehood. Hebrews 9:27, 10:27.

Psalm 95:6-11

*“6 O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.
7 For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice,
8 Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:
9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.
10 Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:
11 Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.”*

Hebrews 10:26-31

“26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

APPLICATION

God will judge all who ignore, oppose, or mock the appeal of Jesus. There is given to man once to die and after that the judgment – and only Jesus saves from that.

God is not mocked by man for long – death comes and then judgment for those who mock. Until then we pray for them – but the day comes when it is too late and they pay the price eternally for their rejection of the truth.

Psalms 119:119

“Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth [like] dross: therefore I love thy testimonies.”

REFLECTION

The day will come when the Lord will remove all the wicked from off the earth. Revelation 20:10-15. There will be a day when all who reject the Lord will be sent from the earth to final judgment. Until that time the wheat and the tares grow together. We have evil people alongside us all the time today, but that is not a permanent reality; it is temporary only while they have opportunity to hear and respond to the gracious Gospel message. John 3:16-36.

Dross – *siyyg*, is the waste from refined minerals, where the *impure particles* are separated from the pure metal, raked off and discarded. All whose lives prove themselves to be “dross”/refuse or waste product will be swept away and cast away in the end. This is a brutal and final picture, but it is a biblical one. There is a limited time frame for man to respond to the Gospel, and that supply of days runs out at some point, and each person must face their maker. All men will stand before Jesus, either as their Lord and Saviour or as their Judge. Ezekiel 22:17-22, Malachi 3:2-3.

The Psalmist faces the terrible truth of this sort of judgment in his own day, for the lost have paid a terrible price for their ignoring of God’s holy demands. Hundreds of thousands of Jewish people are already dead and the rest will follow them to the grave within ten years, and they have all died, or will die in unbelief and rejection of the truths of the Word. The Exile group are at least believers, and they are marching to their physical salvation, even though it is a tear stained road to Babylon. Romans 1:18-32, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12.

The Psalmist thinks of the judgment of those around him, and the future judgment of all who reject God and he strongly affirms in the presence of this reality that he loves the Lord’s work! He loves the Lord’s testimony regarding judgment, for it means God takes rebellion seriously, and he takes holiness seriously, and it means heaven will be heaven. Heaven would not be heaven if one person who hates God enters it. The Lake of Fire is for those who prefer it! The Psalmist sees that the death of thousands has actually been their choice, for they rejected the prophets and the preachers of truth and they preferred death to obedience to the Lord’s Word. We all make choices and some are fatal, and to walk away from God’s holy demands upon our life is fatal.

APPLICATION

Let us be thankful for the existence of the Lake of Fire, for all who hate God and us have their chosen place, but let us with tears urge them to reconsider their choice until the last moment. Grace is offered now, but it is for a limited time.

Psalm 119:119-120

“My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments.”

REFLECTION

The unbelievers mock the truth, but the Psalmist does not mock, he trembles. The devils also tremble, for they are too smart to mock this truth for they know what it means for them in the end of time. James 2:19-20. We must do more with truth than tremble at it. We must live and breath it, and apply it into every corner of our life. The battle for the mind and heart is daily fought and many do not put their armour on and fight, and we must, for our very lives and witness. Ephesians 6:12-18.

Smart people know when to be fearful, and only fools are without fear. The Psalmist trembles at the thought of judgment, and even though he is not destined for the Lake of Fire he is fearful of God's displeasure, for he knows that the Lord God takes no prisoners when evil or sin are concerned. Believers may be destined for heaven, but we all face the judgement of God over sin in our life now and we need to be as focused upon holy living as the early apostles were. 2 Corinthians 5:9-15.

“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace [was] upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” **Isaiah 53:4-6.**

APPLICATION

Let us be fearful of falling short of the life God seeks us to live to his glory here and now. Let us be focused upon the service of the Lord and worship of his holy name, for we are here to bring glory to him, and to use every moment properly.

DOCTRINE:**GOD: CHARACTER OF GOD****Notes**

SECTION SIXTEEN (A'YIN)

Psalm 119:121-122

“I have done judgment and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors. Be surety for thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me.”

REFLECTION

The Psalmist comes before God in honesty and truth, not hypocrisy here. There are some who cannot claim what he claims in verse 121, for they have not been just, right, good, and fair in their judgments and their actions. He can ask the Lord to deliver him from the oppression of others, for he has not been an oppressor, and he asks for absolute justice. As he has treated others so he desires the Lord to treat him.

This is what we call the “Lord’s Prayer principle”, but it goes way back to David himself. 1 Samuel 24:11-27, Psalm 18:18-25, Matthew 6:9-13, 2 Corinthians 1:12. In effect the Psalmist asks to be treated by the Lord in accordance with the fruit of the Holy Spirit in his life towards others. This is the divine justice principle and one for us all to remember when we ask things of the Lord our God.

Psalm 7:1-5

*“1 O LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me:
2 Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.
3 O LORD my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands;
4 If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:)
5 Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah.”*

He asks again and again through the 176 verses of this psalm for deliverance from his oppressors, and if we are right to conclude that this Psalm is written on the long march to Babylon, then the Lord has not completely answered that prayer by this stage of the march. There is still episodic oppression that must be brought before the Lord daily. The Psalmist keeps coming back before the Lord and lays his heart out towards his God seeking deliverance again and again.

He never tires of asking for help, and he never doubts that God will help, and he brings the request, leaving the timing of his deliverance in the Lord’s hands. We often despair when the Lord does not deliver immediately and yet the pattern we see here and in many scriptures is the reminder that the timing of all things is in the Lord’s hands and we have not the right or authority to demand the Lord works in our time! Isaiah 55:7-9.

Psalm 57:1-5

*“1 Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.
2 I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me.
3 He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.
4 My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.
5 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth.”*

I love the content of Verse 122 in my own present financially impossible situation. This man has lost nearly all he had in the deportation from the land. As he heads to Babylon with his few goods over his shoulder he is wondering how he will live there and make a living, he asks the Lord, in our terms, to be his banker, to cover his loans for advancing his business and life where he is going. He seeks the Lord’s provision of business/professional/financial stability in the land he is being marched towards.

He recognizes that his life is not in his hands, and the decisions to be made are not able to be controlled by him. Proverbs 3:6, Jeremiah 10:23. We cannot direct our own path, for we never know all the facts about our life and the things around us, and praise God we do not have to, for the Lord directs our path, for we are His possession in Christ Jesus!

He must have godly wisdom to respond to what is happening, but he has no control over what is happening to him. Just so it is with us through our trying days. God has placed us into an eternally chosen context, and we must respond to that context, but the timing of events, and the events that “happen” to us, appear to us random, and yet they are anything but random. We are part of the divine plan, and it was made in eternity past, and we have a part to play.

Like the Psalmist let us seek the part God would have us play, and live it with all our might. We may walk through dark places and feel deep despair at times, but the path is a chosen one, and the companion of our spirit all through the trials is the Lord himself. Psalm 22:25-28, Isaiah 38:14-17. Remember the three friends in the fiery furnace.

Daniel 3:22-25.

“21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

22 Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flames of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.”

APPLICATION

Let us never tire of seeking the Lord's help, and come before Him daily for deliverance from those that hate us.

Let us never accuse the Lord of slackness in his deliverance, for the timing of all things in our life is in His hands, for it is his “everlasting arms” that are always beneath us, keeping us safe. Deuteronomy 33:27.

Let us praise God, for if we find ourselves in the furnace of great affliction the Lord is there with us in the midst. Let us seek godly ways to respond to what is happening to us, but let us see all things on God's path for our life as his business, and seek his provision on his path, for we are HIS.

Psalm 119:123

“Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness.”

REFLECTION

It is not wrong to feel depressed and sad at times, for the things that happen are at times depressing and sad, but if we are on God's path for us the sadness will lift with eternal joy replacing it. All tears will be wiped away, but there are tears for a time for many of us. Psalm 30:5, Lamentations 3:23, Revelation 7:17, 21:4. The Psalmist is seriously stressed by events and his eye sight and focus is affected, and this is a physiological sign of stress in man. He is waiting so long under such great pressure that he feels overwhelmed and his eyesight fails him and he can no longer read clearly.

At times we will be in this place, and we will be sure that we are on the path of God for us, and yet the pain, anguish, and stress is so great we wonder in the darkness of the night whether we can keep going. We are in good company in such places, we are in the company of this man, and we are in the company of our Lord Jesus. The promise of God is not that we will not go through deep waters at times, but that we will not drown in them, and that the Lord is with us in the midst of them, and he will, in his time deliver us from them. Psalm 32:6, 46:3, 69:1-3, 144:7, Jonah 2:5.

The Psalmist knows that his redemption is near, for the Word is near in the presence of the Lord with him, and he seeks the outworking of the promises of God in his life. He asks for the Word to work out, for the Plan of God to be fulfilled through his life in righteousness. He seeks the command of God to speak out into his situation and bring righteous deliverance to him. This is the prayer of all who find themselves caught in impossible places, for we recognize fully that we have no human hope, but we look to the amazing plan of God, and we seek to see his righteous actions in time, to the glory of the name of Jesus our God and our Saviour.

Psalm 18:1-6

“1 I will love thee, O LORD, my strength.

2 The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

3 I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

4 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.

5 The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.

6 In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.”

APPLICATION

At times we feel great despair under stress, but even when our eyes fail, our God will not fail us. Even when we are stressed to the maximum, the Lord is with us, and he will deliver us to the glory of his holy name. Let us rest upon his holy Character and ask for his righteous and gracious actions to bring us through to glorify His Name.

Psalm 119:124

“Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes.”

REFLECTION

We want the Lord to deal with us in accordance with his mercy, not his justice! Most of us cannot ask the things our Psalmist asks for in some verses, especially about judging us according to our righteousness in our own dealings, for we need to confess many of them. Our slackness stops us joining him in some verses, and we bow in humble prayer and seek the Lord’s forgiveness for the things that hinder our prayers. Psalm 66:18, 103:10-18.

We can however join him every day in this verse and ask for mercy, for mercy is what never runs out with God and he will meet us in Christ always in mercy. We are saved and delivered by his mercy. We praise Him for his mercy towards us. Psalm 51:1, 79:8, 130:3-7, 2 Timothy 1:16-18.

Psalm 69:13-18

“13 But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O LORD, in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation.

14 Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.

15 Let not the water flood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.

16 Hear me, O LORD; for thy loving kindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.

17 And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily.

18 Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies.”

How many times does the Psalmist ask the Lord to “teach” him more and more? The Psalmist seeks the Lord’s blessing upon his life and that will always come through the Word, as he sees more and more depth in it and walks more powerfully in its truths. We can never have too much of the living Word flowing through our being in Holy Spirit power. God’s Word is never academic knowledge to the believer, it is life and health and strength to us. The labour of studying the Word is a labour of love in the Spirit, and it repays the believer with power to live, worship and serve.

Hebrews 4:9-12

“9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

APPLICATION

Let us seek the mercy of the Lord our God, for that is in abundance towards us. Let us seek the water of the Word daily, for the washing of the water of the Word will refresh and strengthen the weary soul and stabilize our worship and our service.

Psalm 119:125

“I [am] thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies.”

REFLECTION

It is always a good starting point to remember who we are as we stand before God. We do not belong to ourselves, we are “bought with a price”, and that price was the “precious blood of Christ”, so we belong to Him. Romans 6:21-23, 1 Corinthians 6:20, 7:23, 1 Peter 1:18-21. We were sons of perdition, but we are now sons of God through Him who gave his all for us.

What we desperately need is the discernment to sift decisions and make good ones, as we face the choices that each day brings up before us. We need the Lord’s direction and guidance in these things. 2 Corinthians 3:4-6, 2 Timothy 2:7, James 1:5, 3:13-17.

APPLICATION

Let us pray, “Lord give us understanding as we walk along the path for us today. Show us your policy and strengthen us in the way you desire us to walk.”

Psalm 119:126

“[It is] time for [thee], LORD, to work: [for] they have made void thy law.”

REFLECTION

Even though the Lord’s timing is the right timing it is bone fide for the believer to ask the Lord to act. The psalmist is not arrogantly demanding that the Lord follow his time table here, and we do well to join him in our own prayers. He is respectful but passionately concerned about the situation he faces and desires the Lord’s intervention now. It is always all right for a lover to ask the beloved to act on their behalf, even if the answer is, “Please wait a while my love”. The Psalmist passionately feels the insults of all those who have hated the Law of God, and he desires the Lord to act.

The enemies of the truth will always break, frustrate and violate the Law of God. They will stand and abuse all who believe in God’s Law, but they do not negate or “make void” the Law in the sense that it no longer applies. Those who hate the Lord and his Word want to believe that their evil negates the Law of God but it does not. Just because a person hates the Law of Gravity does not stop it operating on them! Just so all the other “Laws” that govern our life on this planet – what God says stands, and what man says is always judged. God isn’t judged – we are! Psalm 9:19, 102:13, Isaiah 42:13-14, Habakkuk 2:3-5.

APPLICATION

Let us always be open and forward in putting our desires for the Lord to act on any matter before Him in prayer.

We are beloved of the Lord, and so we can approach the Lord at all times and ask for grace and mercy to meet our needs and deliver us from evil men and women.

Notes

Psalm 119:127-128

“Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. Therefore I esteem all [thy] precepts [concerning] all [things to be] right; [and] I hate every false way.”

REFLECTION

“I love and esteem your Word Lord”. How long is it since you prayed these words of the Psalmist as you walked with God through each day? What joy it is as we walk with God, to pray and praise these words, for our love for the Word is an indication of our love for the Lord. The fruit of the love of the Lord is love for the Word, and esteeming the Word so highly that we feed upon it and apply it into our hearts daily. Psalm 19:10, Proverbs 8:11, 16:16, Ephesians 3:8ff.

Proverbs 3:13-26

- 13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.*
- 14 For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.*
- 15 She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.*
- 16 Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.*
- 17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.*
- 18 She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.*
- 19 The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.*
- 20 By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.*
- 21 My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion:*
- 22 So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck.*
- 23 Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble.*
- 24 When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.*
- 25 Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh.*
- 26 For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.”*

Our values are seen in the time we put into activities associated with the things we claim to value. Many put excessive time into money making activities but little into feeding their spirit in the Word of God. If we value gold we will spend great amounts of time buying and trading gold, but if we value the Word of God we will put our time into learning more of God and his plan for our life. If we love goodness we will also hate all that threatens goodness.

The Psalmist hates every deception that will lead people away from God's righteous Path into evil and sin. Let us be really sure of our values by auditing our time and ensuring we are spending enough time on the things of the spirit, and are not claiming to value God and yet ignoring all he says in his Word.

Psalm 19:7-8.

"7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes."

APPLICATION

Let us worship the Lord and praise Him for his wonderful Word. Let us praise the holy name of the Lord our God for he has given us joy and peace in and through the precepts of his Word.

DOCTRINES:

SIN: OLD SIN NATURE

SIN: OLD SIN NATURE – THE FRUIT OF

Notes

SECTION SEVENTEEN (PE)

Psalm 119:129 *"Thy testimonies [are] wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them."*

REFLECTION

The witness to truth of God's Word is wonderful, and we rejoice in them and find it easy to guard the truth in our heart and walk in its precepts. Isaiah 9:6-7. If we believe that something is wonderful we do not go against it in our daily walk. If we violate precepts in our daily walk it can only be that we do not value the Word of God. If we do not feel that the Word is wonderful we will not keep it faithfully. This verse is a challenge to our values system and is a good "hypocrisy meter". How wonderful is the Word of God to you believer? How does your daily life reflect that?

Psalm 139:1-6

"1 O lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.

2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.

3 Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.

5 Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."

APPLICATION

Oh believers let us be passionate in our faith and express our love for the Lord and His Word.

Let us hear the word "wonderful" in our services more often.

Psalm 119:130

“The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.”

REFLECTION

The Word of God is light to the believer and the entry of the counsel of God through his Holy Word into every situation brings clarity and truth to bear. Proverbs 1:2-8, 6:23. God’s Word alone provides the “Maker’s Manual” of instruction for the creature to satisfy the holy demands of the creator. It is God’s Word alone that gives us the truths about our eternal destiny and will keep us safe from evil choices.

Even the most simple thinker can be made secure in truth if they will only turn the light of God’s Word on into the fabric of their life. Foolishness can only be defeated in the mind of man by the entry of truth. Those who remain fools are culpable, because they reject the entry of the truth that will correct them. Romans 16:17-19, 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

Proverbs 1:22-23, 9:4-6

“22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?”

23 Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.”

9:4 “Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,

5 Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.

6 Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding”.

APPLICATION

Only a fool stays in the dark when he can turn the light on. Let us turn the light of God’s Word on every day.

Psalm 119:131

“I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments.”

REFLECTION

While the emotion of Psalm 42:1 is more familiar to us, with its image of the deer panting for water, the emotion expressed here 500 years later is equally powerful. All godly servants of the Lord show their love of the Lord in their deep and passionate desire to fellowship in the Word and their walk with Jesus powerfully daily. Isaiah 26:8-9, Malachi 3:16-18.

The Psalmist longs for the fellowship of the Word for in his distress he has learned that the Word will always comfort. Men and women may comfort us one minute, ignore or abuse us the next, but the Word of the Lord is always there to comfort and encourage. God’s Word has a stability about it that is powerful beyond all other things in this life.

APPLICATION

In dark places people can fail us, not because they are bad, just because they are distracted or unavailable when we need them, but God’s Word never fails us. God’s Word is there always as our guide and rock of stability in the worse of times. God’s Word is the same always, because God is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Psalm 119:132

“Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou used to do unto those that love thy name.”

REFLECTION

When we face difficulties we can feel that the Lord does not see us, and yet He sees all our troubles and seeks our face to be towards Him. The Psalmist asks the Lord to “look upon” him at this point of distress, and even though theologically we can correct him, we do not correct his heart’s desire, for it is to be our own. “Lord look upon us – hear our prayer and let us know you see our distress”. This is to be constantly our prayer, for it is our desire to be known of God and to be assured that we are loved and heard by God. Psalm 25:18, 106:4.

As the Exiles head into captivity they can be excused for not seeing the Lord’s mercy towards them as clearly as they will later perceive it to have been. Only in the next ten years, as the final rebellion is played out to its final catastrophic conclusion will these Exiles of 605 and 597 realize that they were actually delivered by this march from certain death. At this point they look back to the golden days of David and long for that level of blessing again, but they

will see that the Lord has indeed blessed them through the Exile, and this time will set the nation up for the next 400 years.

APPLICATION

Let us be looking for what the Lord is doing with us at all times. Let us seek the Lord's path through our troubles, and ask the Holy Spirit to show us what we are to do and say on each part of our path through this life. The deliverance of the Lord is sometimes not as we initially think it should be, but it is always perfect, as it comes from the ultimate source of the eternal Plan of God.

Psalm 119:133

“Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.”

REFLECTION

As we walk in uncertain times and on unstable ground let us seek the Holy Spirit's guidance for every step we take that each foot fall may be safe, secure and that our feet might not slip beneath us. We are here to fight, and unstable footing is fatal for the soldier in any battle against a malicious enemy. Psalm 17:5, 18:36. There will always be temptations to wander off the path, and always enemies off the path to abuse and attack us, but the Lord will always be with us to assist us and bring us through to victory.

Psalm 94:14-19

*“14 For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance.
15 But judgment shall return unto righteousness: and all the upright in heart shall follow it.
16 Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?
17 Unless the LORD had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence.
18 When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O LORD, held me up.
19 In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.”*

Psalm 19:12-14

*“12 Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.
13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.
14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.”*

APPLICATION

Lord guide us into safe footsteps where our feet will not slip beneath us. We seek the place where we are stable upon your rock of truth and ready to fight the battles you have for us to fight.

Psalm 119:134

“Deliver me from the oppression of man: so will I keep thy precepts.”

REFLECTION

There are always people around who will fraudulently use and violently abuse us if they can. Malice is common amongst pagan mankind, and even carnal believers can be crooked at times. We are not to be surprised at the malice of men, but we are to be protected from them by the teaching of the Word of God. By their fruit we will spot false brethren and dangerous pagans quickly, and we will be able to avoid such people if we have heeded the Word of God. Matthew 7:13-23. The love of the Word is a protective love.

We ought to pray this prayer of the Psalmist daily, for every day we need to be kept from the evil people who will make merchandise of us. Psalm 105:43-44, Acts 9:29-31. When the Holy Spirit transforms people they become safe to fellowship with, and we see this with Paul, who as Saul was dangerous, but being transformed by God he became one of the greatest of the apostles. If we want total victory over an oppressor, we ought to pray, not just to be kept safe from them, but that they might be saved and become our brother/sister. John 16:8-11.

Psalm 56:1-4

*“1 Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me.
2 Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou most High.
3 What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”*

4 In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me."

APPLICATION

Let us practise vigilance in fruit inspecting of potentially dangerous people. If people have the fruit of evil we are to take great care, but if they have the abundant fruit of the Holy Spirit we are safe with them.

Notes

Psalm 119:135

"Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; and teach me thy statutes."

REFLECTION

To "make the face shine" was to face a person with greatest pleasure in their company. We even still say today, "His face glowed with pride", when we speak of a parent introducing their child to someone. The Father's face glows with joy when he faces us and deals with us as a father. We are beloved and we do well to remember that. Psalm 4:1-6, 80:1-7. God glows with joy when we open his Word and take his holy standards seriously.

God will always teach us things from the Word. All we need do is open the Word and seek the Holy Spirit's indwelling ministries. 1 Corinthians 2:12-16, Colossians 1:27-29. The challenge for all believers is to open the Word and share the wonderful things we have from it with each other.

APPLICATION

Let us make the Lord our God glow with joy – let us draw near His Holy Word and fellowship deeply there.

Let us truly let the Holy Spirit loose within us and be open to what he has to say to us.

Psalm 119:136

"Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law."

REFLECTION

Do we feel the pain that the Lord feels when men mock his Holy Word? Do we feel the pain of the Lord at rejection of truth? It is a good thing to feel the pain that the Lord feels for it will give us a serious heart towards the lost. One great preacher of the past remarked that unless you wept for sinners in hell you should never preach about hell.

It is a challenging thought, and one that is important to reflect upon. We need to draw near the heart of Jesus for the lost, and he wept over Jerusalem, before the very people there killed him. Matthew 23:37. Remember as you reflect upon this passage and the one below that within sixty days of the Cross Peter had preached two messages to the people who cried out "Crucify Him", and 8000 men had been saved! Rejection by unbelievers today is never the end, for tomorrow the Holy Spirit may move in power that you can barely imagine. Acts 2:41, 4:4. Keep praying for the lost!

Luke 23:27-34

*27 And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.
28 But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.
29 For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.
30 Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.
31 For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?
32 And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death.
33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.
34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots."*

APPLICATION

Let us draw fully near to the heart of Jesus for the lost, and feel their suffering in hell, lest we take personally their abuse to us when we give them the Gospel message. Let us see them in hell and never feel anything except sorrow for the lost, never hatred or anger at their abusive words to us. Let us keep praying for them. John 16:8-11.

DOCTRINES:

GOD - NAMES OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

SALVATION: SAINTS

SALVATION: SANCTIFICATION

Notes

SECTION EIGHTEEN (TZADDI)

Psalm 119:137-138

“Righteous [art] thou, O LORD, and upright [are] thy judgments. Thy testimonies [that] thou hast commanded [are] righteous and very faithful.”

REFLECTION

It is always good to remind yourself of the holy Character of God. God is righteous and good and as you remind yourself of the wonderful character of the Lord you discover immediately the reality of his presence. The Lord is “near to all who call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth.” Psalm 99:4-5, 145:17-18.

Psalm 103:1-6

- 1 Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.*
- 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:*
- 3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;*
- 4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;*
- 5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.*
- 6 The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.”*

The Psalmist recognizes the righteous judgement of the Lord upon him and his companions on the march into Babylon, a recognition that reaches its fullest extent in the confession of Daniel in **Daniel 9:1-19**. Daniel fully seeks the forgiveness of God, and takes upon himself the sins of his own people in rejecting the truth, even though he had personally obeyed the Word before his capture.

The Psalmist does the same and sets us an example. On the basis of these biblical precedents we should not moan and complain about the sins of our nation, nor blame others around us, we ought to take upon ourselves the responsibility for the sins of our people and confess them as our own.

Daniel is rewarded for such a prayer with the most important prophecy of the “Seventy Weeks” of the timetable for the coming of Messiah. **Daniel 9:24-27**. There is great blessing in standing in the place of our fellows and seeking forgiveness and restoration on their behalf. Our prayer does not save those who continue to reject the truth, but in a powerful spiritual way we cannot know from this side of time, it opens the door of salvation to all who repent later. Romans 3:3-19, 9:14-24.

The Psalmist and Daniel challenge us to act in prayer well ahead of our full understanding of what we are moved to pray. Only in heaven, beyond space and time, will we fully comprehend the impact of some of our prayers.

We have seen this passage before, but it is so wonderful I repeat it here in light of the words of verse 138.

Psalm 19:7-14

*“7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.
8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.
9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.
10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.
11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.
12 Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.
13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.
14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.”*

APPLICATION

Call upon the Lord each and every day, and seek his comforting presence in the dark places, and allow his light to come upon your path.

Some things will only be understood from the other side of space and time, but we are called to step out in faith and act in prayer in things that are powerful, but mysterious. Let us pray as the Holy Spirit moves us to pray.

Psalm 119:139

“My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.”

REFLECTION

“What so many readily forget, some should zealously remember.” W G Scroggie. This man is “consumed” by his love for the Word and his concerns for the lost around him. We still speak this way of the stress of caring, in fact it is called “carer stress” today in the psychological literature. This section of the longer psalm has been linked to others as a “Messianic Psalm” for it speaks of Christ’s psychological stress and suffering under the abuse of fallen men.

The Psalmist before us in 119, as well as the author of Psalm 69, both personally understand this “Carer Stress” and express it very powerfully. If we love the Lord and share his burden for the lost, these emotions will be our own, and the experiences may also be shared with our Lord. 2 Corinthians 1:5-7, Philippians 3:10, James 5:10, 1 Peter 4:13.

Psalm 69:5-12

*“5 O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.
6 Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.
7 Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.
8 I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother’s children.
9 For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.
10 When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.
11 I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them.
12 They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards.”*

What saddens the Psalmist is that the enemies of truth have forgotten the words of the Lord to them and so they are heading for judgment rather than blessing in this life. These people are his enemies and have abused him, but their fate saddens him, for he has the heart of God towards them as family members of Abraham, and the Lord is merciful not vengeful. Psalm 53:1-4, Acts 28:23-28.

APPLICATION

Let us challenge ourselves in this matter of care for the lost. Do we feel deeply the sadness of the fate of the lost? Do we wear ourselves out with worry for their eternal state? The Psalmist gives us the correct viewpoint here. There is no harshness towards the enemies of the Cross in spiritual people, just deep sadness at their eternally lost state.

Psalm 119:140

“Thy word [is] very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.”

REFLECTION

The Psalmist does not spend long away from the meditation of the Word and its precious and wonderful nature. He is never far from praise and that keeps his heart and mind stable as he marches towards captivity in Babylon. He is undivided in his love for the Word. James 1:5-8. “The unadulterated Word has a right to the undivided heart”. Scroggie.

God’s Word is “very pure” – it is superlative in all ways, and acts as the refining fire in our heart and life, burning away all the dross of man. The Exile will be the burning away of the dross of the nation and a purified and focused nation will emerge from Babylonian captivity. Proverbs 25:4, Isaiah 1:22-25, Ezekiel 22:18-19.

APPLICATION

Let us be sure to submit ourselves daily to the smelter of God’s Word and allow the Holy Spirit to burn away all the dross from our life. We desire the purity of focus of the true servant of the Lord.

Psalm 119:141

“I [am] small and despised: [yet] do not I forget thy precepts.”

REFLECTION

Amongst the captives of both the large captivity groups of 605 and 597 the people were mostly important and high born aristocrats, civil servants, priests, and army officers. This man does not consider himself in their league, although he must be of a noble family to be involved in this march. He considers himself to be the lowest of the low amongst these important people, and yet he is the author of our Psalm and forever is honoured for this work of the Spirit.

It is a reminder that God’s viewpoint is the lasting one, not the viewpoint of men, who often do not see the long term significance of their actions. Others do not rate this man as important, but his love for the Word of God sets him apart from all his peers as the greatest man on this march, in a league with Daniel and Ezekiel. The man they despised has become an author of scripture.

APPLICATION

Let us not value the opinion of men, but seek the wonderful words, “well done good and faithful servant”, of our Lord and Saviour. Beware the short term viewpoint on the value and significance of people. Do not ever under-estimate the value and importance of a person who loves the Lord and the Word.

Psalm 119:142

“Thy righteousness [is] an everlasting righteousness, and thy law [is] the truth.”

REFLECTION

The values of time are just that, values that only last through time, for a short/limited time. The values that are eternal last forever and are enjoyed in eternal life with Jesus forever. The righteousness of the Lord is eternal, and the value of his work for us is eternal. Psalm 36:6, Isaiah 51:6-8. The Word is truth and the ground of our stability and peace.

2 Thessalonians 1:6-10

*6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;
7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,
8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:
9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;
10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”*

APPLICATION

Focus upon the eternal brethren, not upon the things that do not last the end of time, or even rust before they get there. We are made for eternity in Christ Jesus, not to spend eternity here on earth. See the lasting from the temporary.

Psalm 119:143

“Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: [yet] thy commandments [are] my delights.”

REFLECTION

When we see things that are temporal as they truly are we will feel great waves of anguish and distress in our soul. I have spent a wonderful day this last weekend with old Naval Officer friends and we spoke long and passionately about things we shared and the pleasant memories flowed. It was wonderful, and yet as I drove home with my wife we were both tearful as we spoke of days that are now past, with the very buildings of the Naval bases and the ships we served upon gone. The memories were bitter sweet as we thought of the days of our youth. There were no regrets, but the poignant pleasure, tinged with the sadness that is always part of our mortality and the temporary nature of all the pleasures of time.

Nostalgia is a sweet but dangerous thing and can debilitate us if we sit there too long. It is pleasant to remind ourselves of the joys of the past, but the Lord does not want us to focus backwards, for if we live, there are tasks to be done that must keep our focus always forward, to greater service and more joy to come. The joy to come is not tinged with the sadness of time, but is eternal and none can ever take it away. John 3:16, 6:54-68, 10:28, 17:1-3.

All past memories are tinged with sadness, for time enjoyed is never to be had again that way, and all that is past ages. There is an existential sadness that can grip the heart of the man who only looks backwards. Let us focus forward to eternity and the joys that last forever, and in time through the Word we can enjoy them now.

APPLICATION

Let us focus forward to the tasks still to be done, not backwards to the things enjoyed, but now past.

Eternity is to be won – and the joy of eternity is to be anticipated daily through fellowship in the Word of God.

Psalm 119:144

“The righteousness of thy testimonies [is] everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.”

REFLECTION

God’s testimonies are everlasting – and the joy of doing God’s Work goes on forever. Let us savour the Word in our heart and meditate upon it daily, for in the joy of fellowship we know the joy of eternity in time, and it will banish all the nostalgic sadness of the past. Fellowship in the Word will not only banish our existential sadness, it will replace it with joyful worship and the passionate service of the Lord.

1 Peter 1:22-25

“22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

APPLICATION

Let the Psalmist’s prayer be ours daily, “Lord give me understanding of your Word and I will truly live and serve in this life, and enjoy eternity now and forever.”

DOCTRINES:

BIBLE: WORD OF GOD – HEBREWS 4:12

SCIENCE AND CREATION

Notes

SECTION NINETEEN (KOPH)

Psalm 119:145-146

“I cried with [my] whole heart; hear me, O LORD: I will keep thy statutes. I cried unto thee; save me, and I shall keep thy testimonies.”

REFLECTION

Another wave of worry and anguish sweeps over the Psalmist as he enters this next stanza. These waves of worry and anguish are great encouragement to those of us who face great pressure situations. We can experience the victory of faith one day and then the next be woken at 3am with a wave of fear and anguish. Such things do not prove our faith was to no avail, they simply show us that we are indeed human and experience fear and anguish at times. Do not blame the devil for these, for it is a legacy of the fall of Adam that we are weak and fall back into fear and worry so easily. The only antidote to worry is praise and worship. Isaiah 61:3.

It is alright to cry out to the Lord, “Hear me Lord”. We know we are heard when we bow before Him, and yet we cry out as if we need to ask, but that is simply to express our humanity and our frailty and the Lord meets us where we are, not where we ought to be. Praise God he knows we are but dust! Psalm 103:10-18. What joy it is to know that all the Psalmists feel exactly what we feel, and come to the Lord, and are accepted by Him, just as we are also.

Psalm 61:1-4

*1 Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.
2 From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.
3 For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.
4 I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.”*

Psalm 142:1-5

*1 I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication.
2 I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble.
3 When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.
4 I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.
5 I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.”*

APPLICATION

Oh let us come to the Lord in confident expectation of acceptance before the Lord our God who loves us and gave himself for us.

Psalm 119:147

“I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word.”

REFLECTION

The Psalmist was up well before the dawn of the day to pray and pour his tortured heart out before the Lord. He felt the darkness in his heart and prayed and worshipped until the sun rose in the sky, but also the joy of a new day in fellowship with the Lord replaced his fear and anguish with confidence. He shouted out to the Lord in his prayers, and expressed his confident expectation of the Lord’s deliverance. I have had just such a start to my day today. It is the week before Easter weekend and I have been pouring my heart out in this study as the sun came up wonderfully.

I was not aware that I was praying and worshipping out loud until my wife called from the kitchen for me to be quieter, as our youngest daughter was trying to sleep in after working all night on a university assignment. It is a great way to start a day – to see the sun rise in the sky and feel the day-star of Jesus presence rise in your heart. 2 Peter 1:19. I still await the Lord’s deliverance from my own impossible financial pressure situation, and after eleven years of unimaginable stress I still begin each good day in worship, and I transform the too often worry filled nights into joy by worship. I remain in the best company, with Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and this Psalmist.

APPLICATION

We express our earnest hope in the deliverance of the Lord in praise and worship. We express our confidence in the Lord’s future work on our behalf through our prayers and worship. Let us praise the Lord and begin every day in thankfulness – the “attitude of gratitude” being our strength in dark days as we await the dawn of deliverance. Hebrews 7:25ff.

Psalm 119:148

“Mine eyes prevent the [night] watches, that I might meditate in thy word.”

REFLECTION

This man is not afraid of a sleepless night if it can be spent in the meditation upon the Word. I found myself in this place over last weekend, as I went to bed early in order that I might rise before dawn to study these portions of the Word. I eagerly anticipated the early wake up to study again. I was too tired to study in the evening, but I knew that the early hours of the morning when I woke I would be able to read and think again. I looked forward to waking up early to once more open this Psalm. This is the joy that the Psalmist himself knew each night as they went to sleep after a long day's march towards captivity. Before they started their march he looked forward to a time of study and worship to transform the day before the sun rose in the sky. Psalm 63:1-7, 139:17-18.

APPLICATION

Let us not fear lack of sleep – let us fear lack of love for Bible doctrine. It is the Word we need to fire our spirit, not more slumber. Sleeping too long is a sign of ill health, and we ought to sleep long only when we are unwell.

Psalm 119:149

“Hear my voice according unto thy lovingkindness: O LORD, quicken me according to thy judgment.”

REFLECTION

We are wise if we seek the mercy and grace of the Lord, for that is what we will always find. The Lord will hear our prayers according to his loving kindness and it is good to remember that as we pray each day and give praise for this fact. We are beloved of the Lord and we are always heard when we come with no unconfessed sin in our life. Psalm 66:18-20, 1 John 1:5-10.

It is the power of the living God that will quicken our spirit and fire up our soul to stand for truth in dangerous times. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that will enable us to stand secure and stable. Psalm 5:1-3, 55:2, 64:1, 69:16. God's formal words to man do not depress the believer, they fire us up, and ready us for action. The study of the Word brings light and power to us, and is our delight and joy.

APPLICATION

Let us remember the loving kindness of the Lord our God and honour his grace by all we do and say.

Psalm 119:150

“They draw nigh that follow after mischief: they are far from thy law.

REFLECTION

This verse has an urgency that indicates the real presence of evil people as the Psalmist writes these lines, and the reality of their march is that evil people were about them all the time. The march to Babylon was very like our daily life in the business world of today – the only thing that can be depended upon is that you will regularly confront evil. Psalm 22:11-13, 27:1-2.

One businessman said to me recently, “John, the only dependable human emotion and motivation is greed, and I find if I operate on that basis I achieve my goals with stupid people”. He was tough and he was successful, and sadly he reflects reality in our fallen world. Psalm 50:16-20. Solomon sums up the tragic inevitability of the defeat and destruction of evil people who reject the truth. They may appear to be strong and successful, but their day in the sun is short.

Proverbs 1:22-33

“22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?”

23 Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:

26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;

27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:
 30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.
 31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.
 32 For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.
 33 But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.”

APPLICATION

Many men and women are “far from the Law of God” and will bring harm if we draw them close to us in fellowship. Our safety depends upon spotting their evil early enough to pull back and away. Let us be discerning of those around us, and always have good distance between our bodies and those of the enemy’s camp.

Psalm 119:151

“Thou [art] near, O LORD; and all thy commandments [are] truth.”

REFLECTION

The enemy is always near, but the Lord is always nearer. No matter what we face the Lord is as close as our fears and their remedy, for it is fellowship that drives away all despair and doubt. In the last two years we have had many earthquakes in the Christchurch area of New Zealand, over 12,000 significant earthquakes! As I work in the trauma field I have been very busy in this area working with engineers and medical and insurance people. I have recently spoken at the largest church in the city and one of the favourite Psalms of the people there is Psalm 46, as it sums up their reality in the great dangers that they have been through over this two years.

Psalm 46:1-3

“1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
 2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;
 3 Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.”

It is the truth about the stability of God’s character and the certainty of God’s plan that keeps us sane through the pressures we all face on our journey through this world. It is the truth of God that is our hope and song in difficult times. In my own city in Auckland we have just had earthquakes strike last week. They have been small, in relation to Christchurch, only 3.2 and 2.9 level shakes so far, but many have been upset by them. They are likely the precursor to a new and hopefully small volcano that is due to erupt in the Hauraki Gulf just a few kilometres off the coast of the city. As we look to that event in the near future we need to be spiritually where the Psalmist is. Psalm 139:1-2, 145:17-18.

APPLICATION

Though the earth shake beneath our feet and the Tsunami wave roars in the distance we will stabilize our lives on the rock that is Christ Jesus. For some of you this statement is academic, but for me and my family it is a reality that may become factual in the days shortly to come. These Psalms need to be our reality well before we feel the earth move beneath our feet!

Psalm 119:152

“Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever.”

REFLECTION

It is vital when we face great pressures that we can draw on many years close fellowship with the Lord well before the day of darkness has come. It is only long practise that produces strong faith, and great confidence must be built by seeing the truth work out in life many times. As I noted above, in my home city we likely face a volcano emerging in coming years, and all believers need to know the Lord and walk closely with Him. They desperately need to hold the promises of the Word, for the skies will literally darken in a few minutes as the volcano blows its ash into the atmosphere and the lava bombs rain down on all who live too close to the volcanic cone that will form. There will be little warning, and certainly there will be no time to start to learn what the Bible says about fellowship in dark days!

The Psalmist can look back at many years when he took the Word seriously and stored it away in his soul. He has great inner wealth in the Word to draw on now on the march, and this helps him handle what otherwise would be overwhelming pressure. This is the challenge to all as we teach the Word in our churches – that we might give them the truth about their need to build up a bank account of good doctrine for the days that may come upon them.

APPLICATION

It is too late to build up a store house of doctrine in the soul when the skies darken above your head. It is only in the “piping days of peace” that you can prepare for the war that is coming. Let us urge our fellows to feed their spirits upon the Word before it is too late.

DOCTRINES:

APOSTASY

ANGELS: SATANIC ATTACK ON BELIEVERS

ANGELS: SATANIC REVIVAL

SECTION TWENTY (RESH)

Psalm 119:153

“Consider mine affliction, and deliver me: for I do not forget thy law.”

REFLECTION

The Lord knows our afflictions, but it is still all right to ask the Lord to look closely at our suffering and depression, for the Lord cares about our feelings. We can ask the Lord to “come close” to our heart, for the Lord loves us that much. It is a bone fide prayer this one and we do well when we copy the psalmist in praying it in deep places of trouble. Psalm 9:13, Exodus 3:7-10, Nehemiah 9:31-37. Even though the Plan of God is working out, it is good to cry aloud our concerns and the Lord invites us to do this. 1 Peter 5:5-7. It is the Lord alone who can deliver, and daily we need to address our desires to Him and seek his deliverance.

Psalm 13:3-5

*“3 Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;
4 Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.
5 But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.”*

APPLICATION

As we pray our way through the day let us seek the Lord’s deliverance in all situations where the Lord’s intervention is required. God cares about our depression and stress and so let us cast all our cares before the throne of grace and trust his timing for our deliverance.

Psalm 119:154

“Plead my cause, and deliver me: quicken me according to thy word.”

REFLECTION

We need an advocate and the Lord is our advocate in all things we face in this world. Let us seek the Lord’s defence, and not trust in the things of men. Let us cry out to the Lord as the Psalmist does here. I have just wept before the Lord myself these last moments, pouring out my deep pain and seeking the Lord’s deliverance before I break under the strain I feel. I understand this man writing this Psalm and I weep with him as he feels good one moment and desperate the next – for that is the lot of us all when we go through deep waters. Psalm 35:1, 43:1.

Quicken me Lord – bring life back to me, where there is only a pale imitation of life. All my own energy has drained away over the last hour with additional bills to pay and little left to pay them with. It doesn’t take much when we are under great pressure to push us under the water, and that is what we see with this man before us. He is up with worship but down again with a negative comment by another captive, or a violent incident around him. He is fragile and so are we at dark times.

Do not call such cries sinful, for they are just normal and powerful illustrations of how fragile we are under pressure. It is not wrong to be human under pressure, but it is wrong to stay in distress when we can be in worship, for worship and prayer will lift distress if we persevere in them. That is the challenge the Psalmist gives us as he plods onwards through the weeks and months of his great distress on the way to Babylon.

APPLICATION

There are times when we can do nothing but cry out to the Lord and wait for the Lord to act to save us.

Cry out and plead your case with your advocate – for the Lord Jesus is our advocate – and rest in his arms in your distress. Let worship lift the broken spirit and heal the fragile nerves. In his strength alone we can stand.

Psalm 119:155

“Salvation [is] far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes.”

REFLECTION

The great sadness of the lost is that they persist in their rebellion against God and His Word, and so stay away from the only source of hope they have. It is in the Lord’s Word alone that there is hope, and those who reject his Word have locked themselves away from hope. Those who desire to live their way rather than God’s way select for their life all that self centeredness will produce, and it doesn’t produce anything of lasting value. Psalm 18:27, Ephesians 2:8-9.

Man cannot save himself from death, nor from the consequences of his own sins and evil actions – only God can deliver man from the consequences of sin and evil. John 3:16-36, Acts 16:31-36. If man decides not to seek for his maker’s help he is truly alone, and he faces sin, evil in others and himself, and death, and he faces them alone without any of the real power that is needed to deal with any of them.

Isaiah 57:17-21

“17 For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.

18 I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners.

19 I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him.

20 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

21 There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.”

APPLICATION

Let us urge all our fellows to seek the Lord while He may be found, for the day comes when foolishness has destroyed the mind and the body of a man who rejects truth. Let us weep and pray for our foolish friends, but let us not join them in their foolishness.

Isaiah 55:6-7

“6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

Psalm 119:156

“Great [are] thy tender mercies, O LORD: quicken me according to thy judgments.”

REFLECTION

God’s great grace is the sphere of our life and mental stability. If it were not for the tender mercies of God that I can rejoice in, I would long ago have lost my mind under the weight of some of the things I have gone through. It is in praise alone that we can rest and find peace of mind. “Great are your tender mercies Lord God our King and our Saviour and Deliverer.” We can come before the Lord with our sins and be assured of grace as we confess them before Him.

Psalm 51:1-4

“1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.”

We Pray, “Bring life back to me by means of your Word, for as I read its challenges, its encouragements, and its directions for life, I find joy welling up within my human spirit and the darkness of the night is replaced by the hope filled light of another day of worship and praise.” We praise and worship from the darkness of our despair, for his holy

character, and his consistent loving forgiveness gives us hope and power to keep moving through the worst we can face. Isaiah 55:6-7, 63:7-9.

Psalm 86:1-8

- 1 Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I am poor and needy.*
- 2 Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.*
- 3 Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily.*
- 4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.*
- 5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.*
- 6 Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications.*
- 7 In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me.*
- 8 Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works."*

APPLICATION

Let us bow before the Lord in the dark places where human hope has gone. Let us turn the light of God's loving presence on into our heart and mind and stabilize both in the Word of Truth and let the Holy Spirit be our Comforter and the Lord Jesus our sole dependable companion. The hope we have in Christ is eternal.

Psalm 119:157

"Many [are] my persecutors and mine enemies; [yet] do I not decline from thy testimonies."

REFLECTION

At times it will appear that the enemy so outnumber us that there is no hope for us at all, but one person with God is always a majority! Psalm 3:1-2, 22:12-16, 118:10-13. If the Lord is for us, who can be against us? The answer is, the devil and his people, but go further with the logic of God's Grace Plan, for is the devil more powerful than God? So once again we say aloud, "If God be for me, those against me are against God, and they will surely fail in all their devices, for the Plan of God is from eternity past and is sure to succeed". Romans 4:18, 8:31.

Even though the moral pressure to conform to this world is great, I will not conform to standards I know to be false. I will stand with the Lord's Truth against all who come to mock, and I will obey the Lord's Truth at all times. There is no compromise on the standards of God, no deviation from the standards of God, and no side tracks away from the standards of God in his Holy Word. We are called to stand under pressure and have heroic faith, not in our own human strength for we have none against demonic forces, but to stand in the power of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:18.

Psalm 44:17-22

- 17 All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.*
- 18 Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way;*
- 19 Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.*
- 20 If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god;*
- 21 Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.*
- 22 Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter".*

APPLICATION

After the doubts and fears of a dark night have assailed us we are to rise up like the eagle of the morning and draw our strength from the Son of Righteousness who stood against all evil and sin. Let us stand with the Lord against all evil assaults upon us and against all sinful temptation to stray away from the path of righteousness. Let us make worship our start to the day and let us ensure praise accompanies our every step along the way today.

Psalm 119:158

"I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word."

REFLECTION

We are really in danger when we are no longer grieved at sin. I have been burdened with the sins of my fellows and their contempt for God and his Word, and have felt this grief. I had become worried about the depressive feelings that were washing over me, but then I did the right thing about them. I simply sat with the feelings and identified what was depressing me, and it was the same thing that depressed the Psalmist.

There are things that are depressing in truth and we are not sinful when we are depressed about a true situation, we only enter into sin if we wallow in the feelings. The challenge is to feel the depressing nature of sin and then pray for the lost who stay in their sins and evil. John 16:8-11. Prayer is the response of faith and the defeater of depression.

The Lord judges his people, and when religious people get into immorality or paganism the Lord will deal with them and those who value their souls ought to pray for their quick repentance. Ezekiel 8:5-18, 9:3-11. Ezekiel is appalled by what he sees in his visions, as he realises that even some who were on the march into Babylon have continued their idolatry there in the Captivity! He leads the revival in Babylon and it involves the putting away of idolatry fully and finally by the people of God.

APPLICATION

Let us audit our spiritual life at this point. Are we offended at evil's words? Are we aggrieved at sin in the life of others, and do we fear for their eternal life? If we are not grieved at sin and concerned about the eternal damnation of the lost we have walked away from the ministry of the Holy Spirit within.

Psalm 119:159

“Consider how I love thy precepts: quicken me, O LORD, according to thy lovingkindness.”

REFLECTION

Can we pray this prayer? Can we honestly ask the Lord to look for evidence that we love the Word and know that the Lord will find lots of such evidence? One commentator of the 1970s challenged his congregation, asking, “If you were brought to court and accused of being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?” This Psalmist keeps on facing the truth about sin and evil, and its effect upon the believer. He also keeps on affirming the truth about God's consistent love towards us all. Let us draw near to the Word daily and worship our way to calm and peace.

In dangerous and dark places only the truth will set us free from the bondage of sin, evil, fear and worry.

John 8:31-36

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

APPLICATION

Let us draw near the Lord right now in prayer and open His Word and comfort our souls in dark days with pure light.

The Lord's loving kindness is alone the answer to sinners deepest needs, and it is our place of peace forever.

Psalm 119:160

“Thy word [is] true [from] the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments [endureth] for ever.”

REFLECTION

There is truth in the Word from the beginning of time until the end of time, and time does end! We are on a temporary planet, and it is this truth that gave stability to the thinking of the Psalmist as he walked to Babylon. He knew he was in the hands of the author of space and time and so he was safe from the ups and downs of time. Genesis 1:1, John 1:1, Hebrews 13:8.

From the beginning to the end the Lord is the same and the world is his creation, and even the rebels are his creation, and so they are all answerable to Him, and will be finally and fatally for them one day. Proverbs 30:5, 2 Timothy 3:16ff, Revelation 20:10-15. When you are a creature there is no escape for you from your creator, and there is no answer when you stand before Him if you have insulted the love that is shown to you from the Cross! 2 Corinthians 1:10, Ephesians 2:4, Hebrews 2:3. So great salvation has been offered, and so great a judgment must await those who insult such great love as the love of Jesus on the Cross towards them.

APPLICATION

How great the love of the Lord Jesus is towards us, and how great the sin of rejection of his love?

Let us pray for the lost – for they insult such great love and will suffer such eternal separation from God that we can only let our tears form prayers that they might be convicted of their arrogant stupidity and bow before Him and be saved.

DOCTRINES:

LIFE of FAITH: APPROACHING GOD – HEBREWS 10:19-22

LIFE of FAITH: CONFIDENCE

LIFE of FAITH: CONSECRATION

SECTION TWENTY ONE (SCHIN)

Psalm 119:161

“Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word.”

REFLECTION

The exiles were the people who served the foolish last kings of Judah, and both Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin were fools in their rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar, for he had given them power in the first place. It was foolishness for them to rebel and they paid with their lives in the end, and the Lord’s curse was upon their line, with none after them legitimately having the kingship. Zedekiah would rule after them in evil, but he was ruler over a disobedient rump of a nation, with nearly all the best people gone into exile before he sat on his borrowed throne.

Joseph, the husband of Mary was of the line of Jehoiachin (also called Coniah), and so he was not entitled to ever claim the crown, whereas Mary was of the line of David through Nathan, and so was not covered by the curse upon the line of Solomon that is fulfilled in Coniah. Jeremiah 22:24-30, 2 Kings 23:34 – 25:30, Matthew 1:7-11, 16, Luke 3:23-31.

The princes of the land had supported the rebellions, and any who spoke against the foolishness were abused by those in power. Jeremiah the prophet suffered most for his truth telling, but our Psalmist also must have been abused for his truth telling then and possibly even on the march to Babylon. The Psalmist has been abused by these princes, and yet it is he we celebrate today as the author of scripture, and even though we do not know his name we honour him, but the nameless princes are forgotten completely.

This man was in awe of the Word of God not the opinions or titles of men! God is to be stood in front of in awe, never men. Jeremiah 36:22-26. God judges over time, in time, and in eternity. We are best to leave our case in the Lord’s hands, for he will always judge those who abuse us, but let us be focused on never being worthy of their abuse.

APPLICATION

Let us be in awe of the Word of God, never the men who fail and fall. Men can in their arrogance expect “awe” from us, but we are fools if we value men that much, for only God is to be in awe of and God’s Word is always to be our guide.

Psalm 119:162

“I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.”

REFLECTION

The Psalmist is excited by the prospect of feeding upon the Word and finding new and wonderful words therein. He delights in the Word as much as a soldier delights in finding spoil in the tent of his dead enemy. Is this the attitude of the students at the local church Bible study?

This is the attitude of all who will ever make a difference and can sing this Psalm in truth and power. This is the attitude of all believers who make a difference in their church and community. 1 Samuel 12:22-25, Proverbs 16:16, 25.

Jeremiah 15:16-17

“16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

17 I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand: for thou hast filled me with indignation.”

APPLICATION

Let us be known as people who hunger and thirst after righteousness and seek the truths of the Word like miners going after gold, like soldiers after spoil. Let us be excited in our study of God's Word.

Psalm 119:163

“I hate and abhor lying: [but] thy law do I love.”

REFLECTION

The enemy of all believers, Satan, is a liar from the beginning. John 8:44. This means that those who oppose God and follow after Satan are servants of a liar, and that will lead over time to lying being their dominant habit also. The only thing you can be sure of with the satanic, is you cannot be sure of anything. The fruit of evil is uncertainty about what is true and what is false. With our lives and behaviours the opposite should be true; people should be able to depend upon us and our words. Matthew 5:36-37.

APPLICATION

Let us beware of those whose words are lying words. Let us follow the Lord and judge men according to their fruit, and let us be known for the fruit of truth on our lips. We are known by what we love, and what we hate! We love truth and so we must hate lies, for lies destroy truth over time.

Psalm 119:164

“Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments.”

REFLECTION

The Psalmist is not trying to “win points” with God by praying seven times a day rather than the standard three times of prayer, rather he is just recognizing that under the pressures he faces he needs to break up his day with seven times when he bows in prayer, even as he marches onwards. The marchers into exile would probably have been walking for nine hours, and so seven times for prayer as they march would punctuate the day with prayer and stabilize this man's mind as he walks. Psalm 48:14, 55:16-17, 98:1-3.

He is in praise as he walks, for the righteous judgments of God, even those judgments that have led him to be marching into exile in Babylon. Keep remembering this man's situation, for he is facing permanent exile and never seeing his land again. He is praying formally more because to stabilize the mind under maximum pressure it is always best to have a formal and regular prayer time.

APPLICATION

The more pressure we face the more regular and timetabled our worship should be. Structure under pressure keeps stability and focuses the mind. Let us be more careful the more pressure we face.

Psalm 119:165

“Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.”

REFLECTION

The greatest need we have when under pressure is peace of mind in the midst of the stress of the trouble we face. We can handle any situation and even turn defeat into victory if we are at peace within, and are thinking clearly. Peace of mind is actually mental strength, and is the place all military training is designed to bring the soldier to. No soldier is to allow any “red mist” to make them “go nuts” in combat, or else they are a danger to all around them. Peace of mind and inner calm is the goal for all intelligent people. Proverbs 3:1-3, 17-19, Isaiah 32:17, Galatians 5:22-23.

If we love the Law of God we have a passion for truth and have taken it into our soul over many years. The result of God’s Word within is peace of mind through the doctrines of the Word transforming our selfish thinking and replacing it by God centred thinking. Peace comes within when our thoughts are corrected by God’s thoughts, for then our perspective on all events in our life is that of eternity. With Bible doctrine in our soul we are stable and clear thinking and so no external attack upon our thinking can be successful. We cannot be offended, abused, or distracted into false paths, for we have the peace and stability of a thinker who sees truth and error clearly. Proverbs 1:7-23, 2:1-11.

APPLICATION

Let us build our mental strength by regular study of the Word of God all our life. Let us urge young believers to study the Word often and so build their resilience and power to stand against evil and sin, and see truth clearly.

Psalm 119:166

“LORD, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.”

REFLECTION

This Psalmist marches to captivity, but he expectantly seeks the Lord’s deliverance daily, and yet he knows that this will not mean freedom to return to his land, but freedom to serve and bless the Lord in some new way. He seeks the freedom to serve and he finds the deliverance of the Lord even though he still wears chains. Paul found the same freedom as he spoke to the Roman Governor and king of Judea. Acts 26:2-29.

These men challenge us to define our salvation in different ways that the prosperity gospel preachers try to make us think. This Psalmist has seen that just keeping the Word and praising God for the path he has to walk transforms the days he walks into days of worship and blessing. Even though the chains are still on his arms he is free within.

Psalm 130:5-7

*“5 I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.
6 My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.
7 Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.”*

APPLICATION

What is our mental attitude towards our places of trouble and stress? Do we look for opportunities to serve, worship and pray for others, or are we so distracted by our suffering that we lose the day to despair?

Let this Psalmist marching to Babylon, and Paul speaking in chains to Agrippa, both speak to us and challenge us to transform the moment of suffering into the moment of worship and praise.

Psalm 119:167

“My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly.”

REFLECTION

This man knows what it is to keep the Word in his heart and transform his life by his faith. This man’s faith has worked out into life changing behaviours and he can rejoice in what the Word has done within him through the years. As he marches to Babylon he can reap the earlier years of Bible study, and rejoice in all he has known and now sees working through in his life.

He loves the Word and he rejoices in all it has meant and means as he walks each day closer to the city he will die within. He is not focused on the fact of his death in exile, but the fact of his position in Christ Jesus to worship wherever he is, and to serve whatever he does. Psalm 40:8, Romans 7:21 – 8:2.

APPLICATION

We are always in the place of service, and we are always with Jesus, for He is always with us. Everywhere we are we are to serve and worship. Let us do so with all our heart and mind and strength.

Psalm 119:168

“I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways [are] before thee.”

REFLECTION

The truth of this verse is a stabilizing truth in difficult times. It is useful to remember that all our days are spread out before the Lord – and all our life is present tense to Him. We think in terms of yesterday, today and tomorrow, but for God there are no surprises for He is creator of space and time and is beyond them both. We are in the Plan that has existed since eternity past, and so we are with God forever secure in his hands. We keep his Word and He keeps us secure on the Path that has been set out since before time existed and so we are 100% secure and our end is as clear to God as our present trouble is to us.

Present trouble is best faced by reflecting on our future security – we are safe with the creator of all things. We will still cry out at times but we cry out to the one who made all things and we will be heard, for our victory is already secure. Proverbs 5:21, Hebrews 4:12-14, Revelation 2:23.

Psalm 139:3-10

*3 Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.
4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.
5 Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.
6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.
7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.
9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.”*

APPLICATION

We are in an eternal plan and we cannot be more secure than we are within that Plan. Let us see our present trouble in terms of the end of our journey with the Lord.

DOCTRINES:

CHRISTIAN LIFE: SERVICE

CHRISTIAN LIFE: SEPARATION

SECTION TWENTY TWO (TAU)

Psalm 119:169-170

“Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD: give me understanding according to thy word. Let my supplication come before thee: deliver me according to thy word.”

REFLECTION

Scroggie sums up the last verses of this great Psalm as follows below – I believe he captures the summary nature of this last section and reminds us of the fragile nature of the Psalmist and his fellows as they all daily grapple with catastrophe. What they face is too great for human comprehension, but by daily feeding upon and meditating in the Word of God, they can see their way through to God’s victory. They do not see their own personal or family victory, except within the human spirit as it is empowered by the Holy Spirit, finding worship in the midst of total pain and anguish.

As Frankl observed coming out of Auschwitz, the last human freedom, when all else is stripped away, is the freedom to respond to what has happened to us and is happening right now. The Psalmist finds that freedom through the Word of God. In worship the wandering sheep connect with their shepherd and know his love in the dark places they must walk through. Psalm 23:1-6.

- “Verse 169 The cry for comprehension.
- Verse 170 The request and supporting reason of a good man.
- Verse 171 Only the taught can tell.
- Verse 172 What we should tell is the truth.
- Verse 173 God’s hand will help the true heart.
- Verse 174 When longing brings delight, delight will increase longing.
- Verse 175 Only as God keeps us can we live and testify.
- Verse 176 The bleating of a wandering sheep.” W G Scroggie.

“Let my cry approach your throne Lord”. We are encouraged to come boldly to the throne of grace and discover the love and mercy of God there. The Psalmist has cried out to the Lord this way many times in this Psalm, and he has been heard each time, and the Lord has not lost patience with him, nor does he with us when we come again and again to seek mercy and deliverance.

There are passages that echo the emotion and thought of Psalm 119 and it is good to read and re-read them and rejoice in the consistent message of the grace of God in answering our prayers and cries for help. Even when all we feel within is the same old despair, the Lord has heard, and deliverance is coming in God’s Plan. We are asked to wait often, and the Psalmist, like myself, finds this difficult, but we rejoice and worship as we wait. Psalm 27:14.

Psalm 18:1-6

- “1 I will love thee, O LORD, my strength.*
- 2 The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.*
- 3 I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.*
- 4 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.*
- 5 The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.*
- 6 In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.”*

Hebrews 4:14-16

- “14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.*
- 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*
- 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”*

The understanding we seek in fellowship with the Lord Jesus is that which comes by means of the Word of God that reveals the Plan of God, for it is our part within God’s Plan that gives us our way points and our position of power. There is no understanding outside the Plan of God that makes any lasting sense, nor will provide the guidance we need to walk the right path now and the next day. The Psalmist has learned through his suffering that the wisdom of the Lord is all he desires, for that alone comforts and guides him through the march to Babylon and beyond for the rest of his life. If he is to be a slave for the rest of his life, he will be God’s slave, not man’s. Proverbs 2:3-5, Daniel 2:19-23, James 1:2-8.

Even though he knows he is part of the divine plan, and that this plan has come from before time and will be successful in the end, he still brings his personal supplication requesting immediate and person deliverance from his distress. We can know we are in the plan, and that within the plan we are exactly where we ought to be, and yet still

seek the Lord's deliverance from that place in God's power and for God's glory. Each place we find ourselves in is but "for a season", to achieve a purpose, and then the Lord moves us forward, so as we feel overwhelmed in our place we can confidently ask the Lord to move us onwards, for he will. Psalm 89:20-25.

We are leaving the timing in God's hands, but expressing our sad heart in asking for it "soon". The Psalmist is a great encouragement to me in my dark walk at present, for I see his knees buckle as often as my own buckle under me, and he comes before the Lord and is heard, not "zapped" and judged by God for speaking out of turn! The Lord knows we struggle at times and wants us to bring our weakness to him and receive his strength to stabilize and strengthen our "feeble knees" and so keep walking to the point of his deliverance. Hebrews 12:12.

APPLICATION

God will hear us, and he will deliver us, for we are destined for glory not the scrap heap! The Lord delights in our prayers seeking his deliverance, for he will deliver and he will lead us into new service opportunities, or he will lead us home to heaven in glory. We will never be bereft of comfort, and so let us boldly and often come before the throne of grace and give thanks that this is the nature of the one we speak to so often.

Psalm 119:171-172

"My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes. My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments [are] righteousness."

REFLECTION

The right response to learning more about the Word of God is always worship and praise. The Psalmist cannot stop speaking of the wonderful truths of the Word. He knows the nature of God and the content of his Word is righteousness and he delights in this truth, for his life and blessing depends upon God's stable goodness. Psalm 50:23, 71:23-24.

The true preacher of the Word will find it difficult to stop speaking of the Word of God. The lover will always be speaking of their loved one, and they will never tire of speaking of them. Others may get a glazed look as they speak on and on, but they love their beloved and will never stop speaking of their love. So it is to be with us all.

Psalm 71:14-19

- 14 But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.*
- 15 My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof.*
- 16 I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.*
- 17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.*
- 18 Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.*
- 19 Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee."*

APPLICATION

"Oh Lord – who is like to you?" Let us speak often of the Lord and His Word, for He is our life and his Word is our guide book through time and into eternity.

Let us open our lives today to the filling of the Holy Spirit and advance down the path the Spirit guides us into, for there alone we are safe and secure.

Psalm 119:173

"Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts."

REFLECTION

We do not seek the help of men, nor the protective shield that men can provide. We seek the Lord's plan, power and purposes only, for only in that place do we know his presence and purpose. There is nothing else of value in this life other than the purpose of God for us. Psalm 37:37-41, 40:9-11, 78:4.

We have deliberately chosen the path of God, not the success that comes from men's ways. We have chosen the path of the Word, and we feed upon it, not the wisdom of men. We have made our choices for God and we rest in the consequences of these in our path through life. We seek the deliverance that is God's alone, for we are on his path and we serve Him alone.

APPLICATION

Let us affirm again today that we stand upon the promises of God's Word alone – and that we stand upon his truth and no other in this life.

We seek his eternal glory and we desire nothing other than that in this life of ours, for in this alone is our temporal and eternal blessing.

Psalm 119:174

“I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; and thy law [is] my delight.”

REFLECTION

The Psalmist has consistently longed for the deliverance and eternal salvation of God. He has nailed his colours to the mast of his life and they are God's standards. He longs for God's deliverance and God's glory in all he does. The Word of God is his delight – he has no other great joy. All human relationships can be a joy to us in good times, but in dark days many people fail us, not from malice but just their own human weaknesses, like our own.

Others may fail, but the Word remains our delight, for the Lord is our delight in all days and nights. No matter how dark it becomes, his light shines upon our path. The Psalmist seeks nothing other than the salvation of the Lord in time and the blessing of the Lord in eternity. 2 Timothy 4:6-8.

APPLICATION

Let us fill our hearts and minds with the Word of God, for the delight/joy of the Lord will be our strength in dark days.

Psalm 119:175

“Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; and let thy judgments help me.”

REFLECTION

The Psalmist is in a very difficult place here, as we have seen all through the months of writing of this Psalm, as challenges come and go. He has despaired of his life before, and right at the end he despairs of life again, but quickly casts his cares upon his Lord and God. 1 Peter 5:5-9. Be encouraged as you fear for your life at times, for this great man felt these waves of worry sweep over him again and again. Proverbs 13:12, Romans 7:22ff, 8:23ff.

He seeks the formal decree of the Lord to deliver him in this place, for he knows that the direct orders of the Lord are always answered and obeyed by all angels and even the demons must do as they are told by God. In some way the Psalmist is in pressure that may be fatal, and he seeks the Lord's decree to set him free, and he receives that deliverance. There is no arrogance or “demanding” in this prayer, it is a doctrine based request that we also can make.

His confidence in making this request rests in the fact that he believes that this situation is part of the great eternal plan, and so there must be a decree to deliver him, and so he seeks its release and operation at this required time! This is an example of dynamic faith in action! We step out in our prayer requests into the eternal plan of God and seek the Lord's power in action. Psalm 9:13-14, 51:14-15, 118:18-20, Isaiah 26:3-9, Romans 8:28.

APPLICATION

Let us quote Romans 8:28 fully into our daily situations of danger and difficulty, for we can confidently claim the deliverance of the Lord to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are part of an eternal plan and that plan calls for our victory in Christ Jesus – and so let us seek the Lord's victory through our life, worship, and service here and now.

Psalm 119:176

“I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments.”

REFLECTION

Even at the very end of the march the Psalmist has the same experience that is my own so often. My mind wanders off in prayer, my steps wander off from the right path, and I find myself sleep walking through a part of my day. We often wander off into fantasy and foolishness, and the Lord hears our cry when we realise we have just wasted precious time, and we are restored immediately. We are so often slack in our concentration, but he is never slack towards us. We praise God, that like the shepherd in the Lord's parable, the Lord our God seeks us, we do not need to seek Him.

The Holy Spirit searches us out and convicts us to the point of repentance and crying out to the Lord, and we are drawn back to the sphere of his love. Isaiah 53:6, Matthew 18:12-13, 1 Peter 2:25, 2 Peter 2:15. The nineteenth century poet referred to the Holy Spirit as "the hound of heaven" who will always track us down in love, and always with support and rescue. Our stability is simply remembering who God is and what he has said, for his Word remains our stable anchor through all times, and the Psalmist reminds us of this with his last words to us.

2 Timothy 2:11-14, 3:14-17.

11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:

12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

3:14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

APPLICATION

Let us draw near the Word often – for it is our anchor and the Holy Spirit will always strengthen it to our soul.

DOCTRINE:

CHRISTIAN LIFE: PRAYER

Notes

Bibliography:

All Hebrew and Greek etymology is taken from either Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries or **Brown-Driver-Briggs** Hebrew Definitions unless otherwise stated.

English pronunciations of the Hebrew words are according to Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionary.

All Bible quotations are from the KJV unless otherwise stated.

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