

Psalm 119:41-72

As you well know Psalm 119 is the word of God that's all about the word of God. 176 Vs that speak *of* revolve *around* and point *out* the goodness; the grace, the blessings and the benefits of the word of God. The psalmist speaks of his love *for* it, his hope *in* it, the comfort that visits him as the result *of* it. You recall that it reads at a rhythm of 8 Vs at a time each verse in that section beginning with the same Hebrew letter of the alphabet making for 22 sections of 8.

The section of 8 Vs that we're beginning with tonight if I were to summarize them I would say; "No fear, but freedom." That's what the psalmist highlights in these 8 Vs as benefits he finds through the word of God.

Vs 41-42

I think this is the heart of every believer who finds themselves in some sort of bind or in some kind of predicament whereby the eyes of the unbelieving world are upon him/her and there's an air of skepticism if not ridicule from the unbeliever as if it say, "Hey, if God is so great and powerful why isn't He helping you out here? If God really loves you and is for you, why do you find yourself in this situation?" So the psalmist (like any of us) is saying, "God I trust in Your word, the reproach and criticism of the unbeliever is upon me, deliver me so that it might demonstrate to them and cause silence to fall upon them; show them that You're greater than my need."

Salvation/freedom/deliverance are all found in the power of the word of God. We talked about this Sunday morning, there is life changing power in the word of God; here the psalmist is simply calling upon the Lord to go ahead and perform the promises of His word for the glory of His name. "Deliver me; cause Your mercies to fall upon me." Notice he rightly refers to God's mercy in the plural, "mercies". He realizes as any of us rightly would that any form of goodness and grace performed by the Lord on his behalf demand mercy piled on top of mercy from God; he doesn't need a single helping of mercy; he needs it stacked up and piled high on his life.

Notice he also realizes that it's all about the Divine initiative; apart from God choosing to move in mercy he can never attain it; "Let Your mercies *come* to me" there's no way I can invoke Your mercy of *my* will; I can't come to God's mercy, God's mercy has to come to me. That's why we plead with God for His mercies; we want Him to move *not* in justice, but in mercy toward our lives.

Vs43-44

Again, it's a request that's rooted in the mercies of God. It's only by His goodness, His grace and His mercy that His word dwells in us; the psalmist is crying out for an abiding of the word of God in his life. "Lord, let Your word abide in me, and me in Your word."

God didn't have to give us His word, didn't have to communicate via His word, could've left us lost and on our own, but in mercy He gave *to* us and shared *with* us the word of truth. Now we do well to pray even as Jesus exhorted us that we would abide in Him and that His word would abide in us. Why? That we might make *His word our way* of life; that we might keep it continually forever and ever.

Vs45-48

Vs 45 gives us a bit of a paradox, did you catch that? A law that gives liberty; sounds counterintuitive, "I will walk at liberty for I seek Your precepts." But here's the deal; sin would have dominion over us; sin would be a taskmaster to us, it wants to shackle and enslave us. The word of God sets us free. Jesus said, "*If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*" John 8:31-32 True liberty is found in obeying the word and the will of God.

Sin (like Satan) promises freedom but then brings bondage. How many lives do we have to see it in before we simply concede to the facts? Obedience *to* God, seeking out the word *of* God leads both to wisdom and liberty (where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty 2 Cor 3:17). However disobedience; rejection *of* and rebellion *against* God's word along with relying on one's own wisdom leads to destruction and bondage.

Now, there are a couple of things going on here and rather than spending exorbitant time on each of them I'll just point them out for you to see, you can think through it a little more extensively (should you choose to) later.

In Vs 44 he says that he will keep the word continually; that is, He would make it his aim, his life goal and commitment to keep God's word. As a result of his obedience he anticipates 3 things. (Vs 45) to walk in freedom; (Vs46) to be bold in his witness; and (Vs 47) to have a deeper hunger *for* the word finding his delight *in* the word; it's not that we *earn* these blessings, it's that these are the blessings embedded in obedience to God's word.

In Vs 46 he says, "I will speak of Your testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed." There will be a boldness about his witness, it doesn't matter who he's speaking to he knows they have a need for Jesus Christ and he refuses to be a respecter of persons or be intimidated by the position or office that a man may hold. It's as Paul said, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.*" Romans 1:16 It didn't matter if it were a Jew, a Gentile, a Roman guard or Caesar himself if Paul had your ear and there doubts in his mind about where you were at you were going to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ Jesus said, "*For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.*" Mark 8:38

The psalmist will walk at liberty, be bold in his witness and as the result of his obedience *to* the word he will find his delight *in* the word.

Jesus said, "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.*" Matt 5:6 Not the one who's lacidascal and/or apathetic toward the word, but the one who hungers *for* it, is obedient *to* it. He/she will find their delight, their fulfillment in it; they shall be filled.

It's a regular prayer of mine, that God would increase my appetite, my hunger for His word; twice in 2 Vs the psalmist here says of God's word, "Which I love" "Your commandments, which I love." It's out of that love that he finds himself *mediating* on the word of God. One commentator said, "Why then is the Bible read only – not meditated on? Because it is not loved. We do not go to it, as the hungry man to his food, as the miser to his treasure. The loss is incalculable." (Bridges)

When he speaks in Vs 48 of lifting his hands to the word the idea is that of prayer. The lifting of the hands was a posture of worship and prayer. He's saying that he will prayerfully direct his heart to keep God's commandments (Ps 28:2).

So we see the engaging of his hands, his heart ("which I love") his will and his mouth into the service of God through active and intentional submission to God. Translation: "God I give You all that I am, outwardly, inwardly, practically, whole-heartedly.

One final note: in Vs 42 we see *faith* (I trust in Your word). In Vs 43 we see *hope* (I have hoped in Your ordinances). In Vs 47-48 we see *love* (Your commandments which I love). Faith hope and love, but the greatest of these...is love.

Vs49-50

The word of God brings comfort in affliction. The Comforter, who is the Spirit of God, takes the word of God and brings comfort to our hearts.

We note again the power of life that is inherent with in God's word. "Your word has given me life." Jesus said, "*It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*" John 6:63 We read in James 1:18 "*Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.*"

When he says, "Remember the word to Your servant upon which You have caused me to hope" he's again calling upon the promises of God; seeking God to perform the promises of His word; God likes it when we remember His word before Him and speak of His word to Him, laying hold of His promises by faith.

Vs 51-56

Again studying the word and obedience to the word has brought him comfort in affliction. He says, "These things are mine" what things? Things like comfort, hope, assurance of how God will deal with his present situation because he's read the word and knows how God has dealt with past situations that were similar (Vs 52, read); God's word has become his song, his joy.

As I mentioned earlier it's not that these things are a reward *for* obedience, they're the rewards found *in* obedience; these are treasures that are mined from God's word and stored in our hearts as we look *into* the word and make it our resolve to *keep* the word.

One has said it like this, "Although obedience does not earn these blessings, it turns us around to receive them." (Kidner)

He says, "I'm not going to turn *aside* from Your word, to the contrary I'm going to *remember* Your word and be diligent to *keep*, that is, *obey* Your word."

Vs57-58

Real quick we can't read these couple of Vs (Vs 57 specifically) with out being reminded of the 73rd psalm; this is the cry of a satisfied soul. The soul of one who's refused to find sufficiency in this world but has found complete sufficiency in the Lord; this is one of those Vs that point perhaps to the fact that it may've been a Levite who penned this psalm. Because as they entered the Promised Land lots were cast and each tribe was appointed a portion of land, but the Levites themselves weren't given any land. The Lord said that He Himself would be their portion and their inheritance.

Asaph, after becoming disillusioned with the wicked and what seemed to be prosperity for them but only problems for him found himself in this same place. He said, "*Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*" Ps 73:25-26

Thomas Brooks, a man quoted by Spurgeon said that we could answer every temptation with the reply, "The Lord is my portion." There's a lot of wisdom in that; think about it...if He is our portion He is our satisfaction; our fulfillment, we're contented in Christ, He is our all in all, our everything; we have no legitimate need outside of Christ. He is the strength of our heart and our portion forever.

Vs59-60

Vs 59 is of course the testimony of every believer in Jesus Christ and needs to be an ongoing testimony in our lives. “I thought about my ways and turned my feet to Your testimonies.” Our ways lead us astray; we need the word of God to guide us. There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is death (Pr 14:12). We read in Lamentations 3:40, *“Let us search out and examine our ways, And turn back to the Lord;”* A French philosopher by the name of Blaise Pascal who was also a devout Christian had this psalm memorized, he called verse 59, “the turning point of man’s character and destiny.” Meaning that it’s critical for man to consider his ways; where it’s leading him ultimately, how will his ways fare as it pertains to eternity and in light of that turn around and go God’s way instead.

We commend the psalmist for considering his ways because so many seem to go nonchalantly through life and enter into eternity with out *ever* giving serious thought to their ways; they live for the world, forget about God and die.

The psalmist says, “I made haste, and did not delay to keep Your commandments.”

Which is to say he didn’t linger around, want to do one more thing, then come to Jesus. He was quick to repent and quick to obey; unfortunately many make haste to sin but delay in regard to obedience. This guy didn’t lollygag; didn’t dillydally, wasn’t wrestling with indecision; he was determined to turn to the Lord and obey His word. He didn’t “linger” around in his ways. The word “delay” here is the same word that was used of Lot as he “lingered”, being reluctant to leave Sodom (Gen 19:16). The psalmist wasn’t reluctant, he was resolved to surrender his ways to the word of God.

Vs65-66

2 Things, obviously I think that you would do well to underline and remember the words of Vs 65, “You have dealt well with Your servant, O Lord,” if you’re anything like me you don’t spend near enough time reflecting on that reality. We realize through the word of God that God has loved us, He’s chosen us, He’s called us having drawn us to Himself. He rescued/redeemed us, has forgiven us and declared us righteous, He’s placed His Spirit with in us; has called us His sons and daughters; has made us kings and priests and coheirs with Christ. He rewards us for stepping out of the way so that He can work through us, and what did we do to deserve all of it? Nothing at all; it’s simply the result of His goodness, His grace, His mercy and His love toward us, God has dealt well with us...

The 2nd thing is found in Vs 66. James said, *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”* James 1:5 Here the psalmist says, “I trust Your word, I want the spiritual discernment that comes from Your word. So teach me good judgment and knowledge.” You and I are never going to go wrong asking the Lord to each us good judgment and knowledge.

Vs 67-68

Vs 67 is another one of those Vs that will at some point or another find its application in the life of every believer. There’s a “prodigal element” to this Vs (Luke 15); thinking that the grass is greener on the other side of the fence. Thinking we need to figure things out our own way and we invite the chastening hand of God upon our lives. As the book of Hebrews says, *“Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”* Hebrews 12:11 Or as we have it here, “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word.”

Now the NT seems to make a distinction between sickness and affliction; affliction is something that can be brought on and used by God in order to get our attention or turn us around and as such we need to work those things out between us and God. Sickness however (though God can use it and allows it) we don’t see where He ever caused it. James said, *“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.”* James 5:13-14

The word, “Suffering” in James 5:13 could also be translated “afflicted”. “Is anyone among you afflicted? Let him pray.” Get that worked out between you and God; repent of your misdirection; consider your ways and turn your feet to His testimonies (kind of a thing). But, “Is anyone among you *sick*? Let *him* call for the elders of the church, and let *them* pray over him anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.” So there’s a distinction between sickness and affliction.

Now something that's important to remember and it's a good follow up Vs are the 2 things mentioned in Vs 68. God *is* good, He *does* good. No chastening at the time seems pleasant but afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who've been trained by it. God is working for our eternal good and His eternal glory; He *is* good, He *does* good; a word of praise for who God *is* and what He *does*.

Vs69-72

He reiterates again the goodness with which affliction has visited his life; why? Because when he's in the fiery furnace of affliction it drives him to the word of God. How often we find ourselves hitting cruise control when life is going well but when tribulation is rocking our world we suddenly have time to spend in the word of God; and God will use that time to teach us and reveal things to us, both about ourselves and about who He is and how He wants to work in our lives.

“The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver.” Again, what's your price, what would it take for you to never peer into another bible again as long as you live? To forsake the word of God? Judas threw it all away for 30 pieces of silver; what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? May God give us a proper perspective and proper priorities as it pertains to what's really important in this life; and may we be quick to *consider* our ways, *repent* of our ways that we might walk true to the word of God.

Prayer Points:

God we thank You for Your word, quicken our hearts that we might learn to appreciate and esteem Your word appropriately. Help us to serve You with our whole heart. God You are good, and You do good; may we never lose sight. We thank You for Your love for us...