

Psalm 119:73-104

We've mentioned it before; having an academic understanding of the word won't do anything for you. It's not until it makes the transition from my head down into my heart that it begins to benefit me. That's what the section of scripture (Vs 73-80) highlights and emphasizes: an inward appreciation for the word. The psalmist speaks of discerning and learning, he speaks of his desire to be comforted *by* the word, he mentions his meditation *on* the word and the *want* of a blameless heart. It was both his prayer and his aim in a time of affliction.

Vs73

Of course we note here right off the bat the psalmist desire to discern, to gain understanding that he might learn the word. Understanding is a critical key when it comes to our learning of God's word because how can you learn *anything* if you don't understand it. You can't learn a language that you don't understand, but as you get familiar with it and begin to understand what's implied by various utterances then you begin to learn the language. So learning follows understanding.

In Luke 24 we find Jesus meeting with His disciples post resurrection but prior to the ascension. He was speaking to them about the fact that it was necessary for Him to be crucified and raised again from the dead in order to fulfill the scriptures; and we read there, "*Then He said to them, 'These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.' And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.*" Luke 24:44-45 We can't really learn it until we 1st understand it; because what we learn is what needs to translate into how we live. So learning is critical, however apart from understanding I'll never learn.

How often when something breaks down is the instructions given to return it to the manufacture for the appropriate fix because no one knows how to fix a product better than the one who *designed* that product? Even so the psalmist here returns to the Lord; he calls upon that since of ownership in the Lord. He says, "*Your hands have made me and fashioned me;*" "God You're my Designer, my Creator, I'm broken and in need of repair; I'm crying out *to* you I'm calling *upon* You for a little 'warranty work'". He realizes that the word of God is the owner's manual for his life.

God's word teaches us and tells us the truth of where we've come from, why we're here, what it is that we're to do if we're to succeed in life and where we're headed after our time on this planet. God is our Maker, our Creator why look for solutions to our broken lives anywhere else? God formed man from the dust of the ground (Gen 2:7). So the next time someone calls you a dirtball...don't get too offended, they're right! ☺

David declares in Psalm 139:14-16, "*I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.*" Over and over again in those Vs David concedes to the fact that we've been created by God. Every nuance of every detail formed and fashioned by God; He is our Creator.

Here the psalmist proclaims God as Creator; and as such he recognized certain obligations to God because he'd be formed and fashioned by the hands of God. Today many people deny a Creator God; therefore there's no sense of obligation to God (doesn't change the obligation but they deny it nonetheless). You see when we admit the fact that God is our Creator it obligates us to Him as the One who's given us life; it means that He's *above* us, is greater and smarter *than* us, as our Designer He knows what's best for us and it means that there's more to life than what meets the eye; there's more to come, we're connected to the "invisible/eternal".

I won't delve deeply into it but to believe in evolution is to believe a mathematical impossibility with no true data to support it. A man by the name of Marco Schutzenberger, of the University of Paris (he passed away in 1996) said this at a conference on, "Mathematical Challenges to the Neo-Darwinian Interpretation of Evolution" concluding that the probability of evolution by mutation and natural selection is inconceivable. He said, "We believe that it is not conceivable. In fact if we try to simulate such a situation by making changes randomly at the typographic level...on computer programs we find we have no chance (i.e., less than $1/10^{1000}$) even to see what the modified programs would compute; it just jams."

Now as a general rule mathematicians will concede to the fact that anything that bears a chance of even 1 in 10 to the 50th power has zero probability and will never happen. So when you reach #'s less than 1/10 to 1,000th power you have a problem... The bottom line is that we were formed/fashioned by the hands *of* God therefore we do well to seek understanding that comes *from* God.

Vs74

I don't know about you but the more I think about this Vs the more conviction and curiosity sets in. What he's saying is that he knows he's a good influence to be around and when other believers see him (come around him) they're glad because his influence is both encouraging and instructive. He knew that his dedication to the Lord was an encouragement to others, they were glad to see him. When they said, "Hey man, it's good to see ya!" They meant it. Of course that's all the more reason for him to stay dedicated to the Lord; because it encourages and strengthens others and he realizes that his life is one that will *impact* others. The fact of the matter is that all of our lives will impact others; the choice we get to make is whether or not it will be for their benefit or their detriment.

I've mentioned it before but some people are like a black-hole of emotional need; you really aren't glad to see them because you know that they're going to drain you of whatever sense of joy you may've had and when they're through with you they'll leave your now lifeless body on the floor and move on to their next victim... I want people to see me as a positive, godly, encouraging influence. Not an, "Oh crud here *he* comes" kind of influence. But rather, "Hey, he knows the word places confidence *in* the word and is able to encourage me *through* the word."

Vs75-77

In Vs 76 he prays that the merciful kindness of God might comfort him according to the word of God. We mentioned this last week, God doesn't get upset with us when we pray in such a way as to bring His word to remembrance. Spurgeon said something to the effect of, "Our prayers are according to the mind of God when they are according to the word of God." You know you're praying according to God's *will*, when you're praying according to His *word*.

Vs 75 is one of those “Underline this” kind of Vs in your bible. “I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are right” This is one of those critical principles that is important to let marinate and permeate our hearts. This was the whole premise that Ab used when he was reasoning with the Lord regarding the deliverance of Lot from Sodom; that the Judge of all the earth will do what’s right. No one will stand before the Lord and feel as though they got a bum rap; God is good, He does good (vs68), the judgments of the Lord are right.

“In faithfulness You have afflicted me”, if a friends wounds are faithful (Prov 27:6) how much more the affliction of God upon our lives? The writer of Hebrews in reference to the chastening that comes to us from our earthly father as opposed to our heavenly Father says this, “*For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.*” Hebrews 12:10 It’s in faithfulness that God afflicts us; because He has our eternal best interest in His heart. It’s out of love *for* us that He will at times bring affliction *to* us so that He might draw us back to Himself and deepen our walk *with* Him and our awareness of our dependence *upon* Him.

Vs78-80

Notice he wants a life that’s unashamed and wants the proud to be filled with shame. Even in that, shame for the proud (because it’s a shameful thing to be proud) is a plea of mercy toward them. In the 83rd Ps Asaph prayed that God would fill their faces with shame that they might *seek the name of the Lord*. Finding the solution (if you will) to their shame in the Lord.

But as for the believer the last thing we want is to be ashamed before the Lord. Because that’s indicative of sin or neglect on our behalf; John said, “*And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.*” 1 John 2:28 We want a heart that’s blameless regarding the word of God, we want to *know* and *keep* the word of God lest we be ashamed at the appearing of Jesus Christ

Vs81-82

Again we note that the psalmist’s diligence was based in his affliction; nothing seems to motivate us to seek the Lord like pain, suffering or affliction. One has said, “This sense of personal need is and remains a greater motivation for diligent study than theological curiosity.”

What we have here is a sense of desperation; he's getting weak awaiting God's salvation. Not salvation in the sense of saving his soul, but the idea here is that of deliverance from a life situation that doesn't favor him. So he's desperate, but not despairing there's a difference. Paul talked about that in 2nd Cor Ch 4 when he said, "*We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed —*" 2 Cor 4:8-9 Desperate but not despondent, not in total despair or at a total loss because Christ is my rock and my refuge and my strength.

Vs83-84

Couple things here: wineskin in smoke equals dried out and feeling pretty much useless; he feels weak and fragile. He's going through a dry time spiritually but he's refuses to cast aside the word of God.

Dry times spiritually are simply a part of the Christian life. There are seasons of an incredible sense of nearness *to* God and intimacy *with* God, then there are other times whereby we walk by faith knowing that God has not nor will He ever forsake us but our feelings betray us. Regardless of how we *feel* we're to *by faith* rest in the promises of the word of God.

The psalmist felt was experiencing a dry time spiritually but he refused to allow it to altar his life devotionally, he maintained his time in the *word* of God seeking after the *heart* of God. The word of God is able to bust up the fallow grounds that can at times be found in our heart. We read in Jer 23:28-29, "*The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. 'What is the chaff to the wheat?' says the Lord. 'Is not My word like a fire?' says the Lord, 'And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?'*" Maybe the flame has died down in your heart, God's word can rekindle the fire; maybe your heart feels cold and callused, God's word can bust up the fallow ground and begin to bring forth fruit in your life once again.

Vs 84 asks a great question; “How many are the days of Your servant?” Of course he asks the question in the light of wondering if he’s ever going to see God vindicate him before his enemies while he’s still alive. The answer to that is, maybe he would, maybe he wouldn’t. God doesn’t owe us to allow us to see the way, when and how He deals with our enemies. Vengeance is His, He will repay. But it’s a great question to ponder upon because it reminds us of the brevity of life. Job likened life to being faster than a weaver’s shuttle and like a breath (Job 7).

Psalm 39 says, *“Lord, make me to know my end, And what is the measure of my days, That I may know how frail I am. Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my age is as nothing before You; Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor.”* Psalms 39:4-5

Our lives are here one moment and gone the next; how critical it is that we maintain the eternal perspective and keep our eyes *on* and our faith *in* Jesus Christ

Vs85-88

He was looking for revival, renewal, yet he realized that even should God restore him it wasn’t because he in anyway deserved it (even as in love with God and the word of God as he was); it would be the result of the lovingkindness of God poured out upon his life.

What’s the point, what’s the purpose of a renewed spirit and revival of heart, spiritual vigor and vitality? To enjoy a season of spiritual excitement? No (though that’s a cool benefit); the psalmist says, “I’m looking to be revived *by* You that I might walk more faithfully, more obediently *to* You.”

Vs89-91

So much in these few Vs, all I really want to point out is the fact once again of God as the Creator. He “established” the earth and it abides according to His word, His will.

I also want to point out the permanency of God’s Word and His faithfulness; there’s no variance in either of them. His word is settled in heaven therefore His faithfulness will endure to all generations. One mandates the other, God’s can’t be unfaithful because He’s bound Himself by His word. Now, that’s not to say that He would be anyway, God is perfect, holy and righteous. My point is simply that God has declared to us His never ending faithfulness and as established and eternal is His word so to with His faithfulness.

The word of man is changing constantly; it's good for you this week, it's bad for you next week. We've eaten it for years but now it causes cancer, I thought this now I think that. Man is always changing, God's word remains the same. The same yesterday, today and forever: Mal 3:6 "*For I am the Lord, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.*" Who among us wouldn't be consumed if the Lord were to change His mind and base this whole thing off of *our* righteousness as opposed to *His*? We thank God His word is settled in heaven; it's eternal. Heaven and earth will pass away, the word of God will never, by no means pass away (Matt 24:35).

BTW on a side note that also tells us that the book you hold in your hand known as the bible isn't the words, ideas and/or philosophies of man. It's the infallible word of God; didn't come from man it originated and is settled in heaven.

Vs92-93

The idea here is that the word of God isn't our escape from life but rather it's that which strengthens us to face life and serve God effectively. Studying the word of God (for the psalmist) wasn't a burdensome chore; it was a delight. We talked about "crisis" Sunday morning; it's God's word that equips us to deal with the crisis when it confronts us.

That's one reason we seek God's word. The verb "sought" in Vs 94 means to search out and read repeatedly. He could count on its consistency for counsel therefore he consulted it carefully. Philosophies change, political methods fail, promises and contracts are broken, but the Word of God stands true, it's settled in heaven.

Vs 96

I like the way the amplified bible interprets this Vs. It says, "I have seen that everything [human] has its limits and end [no matter how extensive, noble, and excellent]; but Your commandment is exceedingly broad and extends without limits [into eternity]." Ps 119:96
AMP

It doesn't matter how great, how awesome or beautiful a thing it is, if it finds it's "perfection" in this world it has a limit, it has an end. But the word of God is eternal. Now that's not to say that there aren't some great things in this world; God has given us all things to richly enjoy. But what it is saying is that as great as some things may be in this life there's something greater still; the word of God. It's before creation, it sustains creation, it will endure beyond all of creation; mankind will never reach perfection this side of eternity. We have a limited mind, a limited ability, we're limited in strength. So as to where mankind has definite limits the word and the works of God are limitless, boundless and immeasurable.

Vs97-100

This sort of takes us back to the plea of Vs 73; "Give me understanding that I may learn Your commandments." From where do we receive and achieve wisdom? The word of God; we're not talking here about simple knowledge. Knowledge is easy to accumulate; wisdom is what we do with that knowledge. It's understanding *of* that knowledge that leads to an appropriate course of action in my life.

Vs101-104

Is the word of God a bitter necessity to you, or is there a sweetness *to* it, a desire *for* it, a craving *of* it? Is it like food, medicine, is it a comfort and a delight? When a soul is full of self and sin it doesn't sense the sweetness of Christ; there's no appetite for the things of the Spirit; it's when we're empty of self, repentant of sin that we're hungry for the things of heaven; heavenly minded with a want to get into God's word.

God's word teaches us right from wrong, good from evil, proper and inappropriate, what's true as opposed to false. The best way to recognize the lie is to know the truth.

Vs 104

Prayer Points:

God open our understanding that we might learn Your word and live Your word. Revive our hearts and help us to keep our sights fixed *on* You that our lives might bring glory *to* You.