

Psalm 119 (verses 137-152)

TZADDI

“Thy word is very pure”

Verses 137-144: God never did, and never can do wrong to any. The promises are faithfully performed by Him that made them. Zeal against sin should constrain us to do what we can against it, at least to do more in religion ourselves. Our love to the word of God is evidence of our love to God, because it is designed to make us partake his holiness. Men's real excellency always makes them low in their own eyes. When we are small and despised, we have the more need to remember God's precepts, that we may have them to support us. The law of God is the truth, the standard of holiness, the rule of happiness. But the obedience of Christ alone justifies the believer. Sorrows are often the lot of saints in this vale of tears; they are in heaviness through manifold temptations. There are delights in the word of God, which the saints often most sweetly enjoy when in trouble and anguish. This is life eternal, to know God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent (John 17:3). May we live the life of faith and grace here, and be removed to the life of glory hereafter.

Psalm 119:137 "Righteous [art] thou, O LORD, and upright [are] thy judgments."

TZADDI: The Eighteenth Part.

Essentially, originally, and of himself. Naturally, immutably, and universally, in all his ways and works of nature and grace. In his thoughts, purposes, counsels, and decrees. In all the dispensations of his providence. In redemption, in the justification of a sinner, in the pardon of sin, and in the gift of eternal life through Christ.

"And upright are thy judgments": They are according to the rules of justice and equity. The precepts of the word, the doctrines of the Gospel, as well as the judgments of God inflicted on wicked men. And all the providential dealings of God with his people, and also the final judgment.

LORD here is Jehovah. Righteousness is the character of Jehovah. Jesus Christ (the Word), is also righteous. The judgements of God are above all other judgements. They are right, they are pure, they are truth. Just as there is no blemish to be found in the judgements of the LORD, there is no blemish in His Word.

Psalm 119:138 "Thy testimonies [that] thou hast commanded [are] righteous and very faithful."

Thy law, considered as a testimony as to what is right and best.

"Are righteous and very faithful": Margin, as in Hebrew, "righteousness and faithfulness." They are "so" righteous, and so deserving of confidence, so certain to be accomplished, and so worthy

to be trusted in. That they may be spoken of as "righteousness" and "fidelity" of the most perfect kind. The very essence of that which is right.

This is so clear in its meaning, that it leaves nothing to be said. The Word is beyond question. It is absolute truth. You can depend on it; it will not let you down. This is also true of not just the testimonies, but of the One who spoke them as well.

Psalm 119:139 "My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy words."

Zeal for God and his glory, for his word and ordinances and worship. Which is a fervor of the mind, burning love, and flaming affections for God, shown in a holy indignation against sin and sinners. This was a zeal according to knowledge, sincere and hearty, and what continued; and which was shown in embracing and defending the truths of the word, and resenting every indignity cast upon them. To such a degree, that it ate up his spirit, wore away his flesh, and almost consumed him (see Psalm 69:9).

"Because mine enemies have forgotten thy words": Not merely through an indifference to them, and inattention in hearing them. Nor through want of an earnest heed to keep and retain them. Nor through negligence in laying them up, and a carelessness in making use of proper means to recollect them. But through an aversion to them, a hatred of them, and a spiteful malicious contempt of them, casting them away and despising them. Which stirred up the spirit of the psalmist, and raised such an emotion in him as was almost too much for him.

David is so heart sick, because their enemies (his and God's), have not realized how perfect the Words of God are. They not only did not realize, but they did not even accept them as the Word of God. If they did not believe there was a God, then possibly that explains why they do not believe His Word. If they would stop and listen to it, or read it, then they would have to admit that it far surpassed all other things written or spoken. This is just saying, that he is utterly grieved by them not accepting God's Word.

Psalm 119:140 "Thy word [is] very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it."

"Very pure": Like silver refined 7 times (compare Psalm 12:6), the Word is without impurity, i.e., it is inerrant in all that it declares.

If this were speaking of gold, it would be stated that it was 24 Karat. All of the imperfections of most writings are not found in this Word. It is perfect. It must not be added to, or taken away from. David loves it, because it is perfect. It cannot be improved upon. Truth, in its purest form, cannot be improved upon, and that is what God's Word is. Perfection would be a good description.

Psalm 119:141 "I [am] small and despised: [yet] do not I forget thy precepts."

Or, "I have been". Some versions render it "young"; as if it had respect to the time of his anointing by Samuel, when he was overlooked and despised in his father's family (1 Sam.

16:11). But the word here used is not expressive of age, but of state, condition, and circumstances. And the meaning is, that he was little in his own esteem, and in the esteem of men, and was despised. And that on account of religion, in which he was a type of Christ (Psalm 22:6). And which is the common lot of good men, who are treated by the world as the faith of it, and the rejecting of all things.

"Yet do not I forget thy precepts": To observe and keep them. The ill treatment of men on account of religion did not cause him to forsake it, or to leave the ways, word, and worship of God (see Psalm 119:83).

This would almost make you believe that this is not David, but you must remember he is doing the talking here. This is his own description of himself. Even though those around him despise him, he still remembers the teachings of God.

Psalm 119:142 "Thy righteousness [is] an everlasting righteousness, and thy law [is] the truth."

It never changes. The principles of thy law, of thy government, and of thy method of saving people, are the same under all dispensations, in every land, in all worlds. And they will remain the same forever. Human governments change. Old dynasties pass away. New laws are enacted under new administrations. Customs change. Opinions change. People change. The world changes. But as God himself never changes, so it is with his law. That law is founded on eternal truth, and can never change.

"And thy law is the truth": It is founded on "truth;" on the reality of things. It is so essentially founded on truth, it springs so certainly out of truth, or out of the reality of things, that it may be said to be the truth itself. He who understands the law of God understands what truth is, for it is the expression and the exponent of that which is true.

The righteousness of God is like God himself, it has no beginning and has no end. Jesus said "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life". Jesus is the fulfillment of the law.

Psalm 119:143 "Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: [yet] thy commandments [are] my delights."

Or, "found me". Outward troubles and inward distress. Troubles arising from his enemies, the men of the world, that hated and persecuted him. And from a body of sin and death, from the temptations of Satan, and divine desertions. Some from without, and others from within. Troubles both of body and mind, which is what all good men are liable to.

"Yet thy commandments are my delights": So far from being grievous, that they were a pleasure to him. Yea, exceedingly delighted him, and cheered and refreshed his spirits amidst all his troubles.

David's life had been full of sorrow and anguish over his children and grandchildren. Absalom, had given him many heartaches, because of his jealousy over Solomon. Power and money in this

life have a tendency to bring sorrow more than poverty does. Families that are torn apart can bring more sorrow than we can bear. The delights that helped David through all of this was the commandments of God. The covenant that God had made with man was an unbreakable covenant. David looked at God's Word in time of sorrow, and it helped him.

Psalm 119:144 "The righteousness of thy testimonies [is] everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live."

The principles of righteousness on which they are founded. Those testimonies, those laws, are not arbitrary, or the mere expressions of will. They are founded on right and justice as seen by God, And his laws are his testimony as to what truth and justice are.

"Is everlasting" (see notes at (Psalm 119:142).

"Give me understanding, and I shall live": Give me a right view of thy law, and thy truth, and I shall have real life (see notes at Psalm 119:34).

If he could only truly understand the teachings of God, it would cause him to have life back in his spirit. Family problems can break your spirit to the point, that sometimes, it seems hardly worth the effort to go on. If David's understanding were opened, he would be able to see the end of all this and a better tomorrow.

KOPH

“Thy commandments are truth”

Verses 145-152: Supplications with the whole heart are presented only by those who desire God's salvation, and who love his commandments. Whither should the child go but to his father? Save me from my sins, my corruptions, my temptations, all the hindrances in my way, that I may keep thy testimonies. Christians who enjoy health, should not suffer the early hours of the morning to glide away unimproved. Hope in God's word encourages us to continue in prayer. It is better to take time from sleep, than not to find time for prayer. We have access to God at all hours; and if our first thoughts in the morning are of God, they will help to keep us in his fear all the day long. Make me lively and cheerful. God knows what we need and what is good for us, and will quicken us. If we are employed in God's service, we need not fear those who try to set themselves as far as they can out of the reach of the convictions and commands of his law. When trouble is near, God is near. He is never far to seek. All his commandments are truth. And God's promises will be performed. All that ever trusted in God have found him faithful.

Psalm 119:145 "I cried with [my] whole heart; hear me, O LORD: I will keep thy statutes."

KOPH: The Nineteenth Part.

Prayer is often expressed by crying. Which sometimes signifies mental, and sometimes vocal prayer. And generally supposes the person praying to be in distress, either outward or inward. This prayer of the psalmists was hearty and cordial, not with his mouth and lips only, but with his heart also. It did not proceed from feigned lips, but was put up in sincerity and truth. Yea, it

was with his whole heart, with all the powers and faculties of his soul employed. His affections set on God. The desires of his soul after him, and his will submitted to his. It denotes the intenseness, earnestness, and fervency of prayer.

"Hear me, O Lord": The prayer he had put up, and answer it. Some persons pray, and that is enough. They do not concern themselves whether their prayers are heard or not. But David desired an answer, and looked after that.

"I will keep thy statutes": Not in his own strength, but in the strength of the Lord. And it is to be understood not merely as a resolution what he would do. Nor as a promise, which he uses as a plea, argument, or motive to be heard. But rather it expresses the end of his being heard, or the thing for which he desires to be heard. For so it may be rendered, "that I may keep thy statutes"; hear me, and give me grace and strength to enable me to observe them.

This prayer to God is a sincere prayer from the heart. The fact that the prayer brought tears, is another sign of the sincerity of the prayer. Open your ears to me, and do not close me out LORD. Notice the determination of David in this prayer to keep the ways of the LORD. The keeping of the statutes is not a condition of the prayer. David would keep the statutes anyway. He is just reminding God that he does keep his statutes.

Psalm 119:146 "I cried unto thee; save me, and I shall keep thy testimonies."

In his distress he cried and prayed to the Lord. And this was a principal and leading petition, that he would "save" him out of all his troubles and afflictions, and out of the hands of all his enemies. And with a temporal, spiritual, and eternal salvation which he knew he was able to do, and none else.

"And I shall keep thy testimonies": Such salvation will affect my heart. And the sense of it influence and engage me to have the utmost regard to the word of God. Its truths and doctrines, precepts and ordinances, so as carefully to observe them.

This keeping of the testimonies is conditional. He would keep the testimonies, if the Lord saved him. If he were not saved, he would not be wishing to do the testimonies of the LORD. The only way to get saved, is to sincerely cry out to be saved.

Psalm 119:147 "I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word."

That is, he awoke and got up, and prayed, before the day broke, the morning looked forth, or the sun arose. He was early as well as earnest in his supplications to God (see Psalm 5:3). As Christ, his antitype, rose early in the morning, a great while before day, and went out to a solitary place, and prayed (Mark 1:35).

"I hoped in thy word": Which is a great encouragement to prayer, the grace of hope itself is, though a man can only put his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope. And especially when it is grounded on the word of promise, that God will hear and answer his people, when they call upon him in a time of trouble. And particularly hope in Christ, the essential Word, is a great

encouragement. Many encouraging arguments to prayer are taken from the person, office, advocacy, and mediation of Jesus Christ (Heb. 4:14).

This is saying, he was up all night praying. He did not wait until break of day to begin. He has studied God's Word, and knows that it promises salvation to all who seek it. His hope is that he has fulfilled his part, so that salvation will come to him.

Psalm 119:148 "Mine eyes prevent the [night] watches, that I might meditate in thy word."

The Targum is, "the morning and evening watches."

"There were three of them": Kimchi interprets it of the second and third. The meaning is, that the psalmist was awake and employed in one religious exercise or another, praying, reading, or meditating. Either before the watches were set, or however before the time that some of them took place, or at least before they were all over.

"That I might meditate in thy word": He rose so early, in order to give himself up to meditation on the word of God. That he might be better instructed in the knowledge of divine things. That he might have solace and comfort from thence under his afflictions. And that he might be better furnished for the work of prayer. For the more familiar the word of God is to us, the better able we are to speak to God in his own language.

This is just saying, that he did not go to bed at the usual bedtime. He stayed up and prayed, and thought on God's Word. He finds comfort in God's Word. He knows it is true, and he is praying that it will come true in his life.

Psalm 119:149 "Hear my voice according unto thy lovingkindness: O LORD, quicken me according to thy judgment."

According to thy mercy; thy goodness. Let that be the rule in answering me; not my deserts, or even the fervor of my prayers. We can desire no better rule in answer to our prayers.

"O Lord, quicken me": Give me life; cause me truly to live (see notes at Psalm 119:40).

"According to thy judgment": Thy law as a rule of judgment; thy revealed truth, with all its gracious promises.

He is asking God to hear him, because God is kind, and loving and good. David does not even try to claim any rights with God. He wants God to hear him, because God is kind, not because he deserves to be heard. We said, in a previous lesson, that the quickening is of the spirit, and not of the flesh. You can read about this in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians. He does not fear the judgement of God, because he knows God is merciful to those who admit their sin.

Psalm 119:150 "They draw nigh that follow after mischief: they are far from thy law."

They follow me; they press hard upon me.

"That follow after mischief": That seek to do me wrong.

"They are far from thy law": They yield no obedience to it. They are not influenced by it in their conduct toward me.

Those who do not keep the law of God are not of God, they are of the devil. They are like the devil, in that they roam around seeking whom they may destroy. They are not happy to be lost themselves, they would like to cause others to get in the mischief with them. They prey on those they believe to be helpless. This would have been the case with David, but he had the LORD on his side. One, and the LORD, are a majority.

Psalm 119:151 "Thou [art] near, O LORD; and all thy commandments [are] truth."

God was present with him; he was ready to hear his cry. He was at hand to save him (compare Psalm 145:18). The psalmist had the assurance, springing from deep feelings, and the conscious presence of God. Which the people of God often have, that God is very near to them. That he is ready to hear them. That their prayers are answered. That they are in the presence of a heavenly Friend. Such are among the precious experiences of the life of a religious man.

"And all thy commandments are truth": All that thou hast ordained; all that thou hast promised. The psalmist felt this. He was experiencing the truth of what God had assured him of. Not a doubt came into his mind, for God was near him. This conviction that God is "near" us, this manifestation of God to the soul as a present God, is one of the most certain assurances to our own minds of the truth of religion, and of our acceptance with him.

We are promised in the Word of God that He will never leave us, or forsake us. He is always as close as our next prayer. David is now feeling the presence of God. He glorifies the commandments of the LORD one more time.

Psalm 119:152 "Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever."

Or, "from thy testimonies, I have known of old": by carefully reading the Scriptures which testify of God. His mind and will, and frequently meditating on them. He had learned a long time ago, even from his youth, what follows:

"That thou hast founded them for ever": That the things contained in them are sure and certain, established and eternal truths. The moral law and the precepts of it are eternal, and of perpetual obligation. Not one jot or tittle of them shall ever fail. The Gospel, and the truths of it, are everlasting, and shall ever remain. In spite of all the opposition, craft and cunning, fury and force of men, to undermine and root them out (see Psalm 119:89).

From the time that David had been a young lad, he had known and loved God. He knew that God had been with him, when he herded the sheep and fought off the wild animals. When David came against Goliath, he came in the name of God. He had always known and trusted the testimonies of God. This same God had kept Saul from killing him. He had known from his old

time relationship with God, that The LORD God He is God. He knew that He was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, from the things he had read about them. There had never been a doubt with David that God had founded His testimonies forever.

Psalm 119 (137-152) Questions

1. LORD, in verse 137, is whom?
2. What is the character of Jehovah?
3. Describe the judgements of God.
4. Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are _____ and _____.
5. This not only covers the testimonies, but who?
6. What has consumed him in verse 139?
7. What is verse 139 talking about?
8. What explains why they do not believe His Word?
9. What Karat would the Word be, if it were gold?
10. Why does David love the Word so much?
11. What would almost make you believe that it is not David writing verse 141?
12. Why can we assume it is David?
13. What is the righteousness of God like?
14. _____ is the fulfillment of the law.
15. What was the anguish in David's life?
16. What helped David through the anguish?
17. Why would it help David, if his understanding were opened?
18. What is verse 145?
19. How do you know it is in earnest?
20. What did preventing the dawning mean?
21. What was meant by, preventing the night watches?

22. What did David do, while he was up?
23. Hear my voice according to thy _____.
24. Where do we read more about the quickening Spirit?
25. Those who are not following God are who?
26. How do we know God is near?
27. Name several times when David knew for sure God was with him.