

Psalm 119 (verses 73-88)

JOD

“Let the proud be ashamed”

Verses 73-80: God made us to serve him, and enjoy him; but by sin we have made ourselves unfit to serve him, and to enjoy him. We ought, therefore, continually to beseech him, by his Holy Spirit, to give us understanding. The comforts some have in God, should be matter of joy to others. But it is easy to own, that God's judgments are right, until it comes to be our own case. All supports under affliction must come from mercy and compassion. The mercies of God are tender mercies; the mercies of a father, the compassion of a mother to her son. They come to us when we are not able to go to them. Causeless reproach does not hurt, and should not move us. The psalmist could go on in the way of his duty, and find comfort in it. He valued the good will of saints, and was desirous to keep up his communion with them. Soundness of heart signifies sincerity in dependence on God, and devotedness to him.

Psalm 119:73 "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments."

JOD: The Tenth Part.

“Thy hands”: Figuratively refers to God’s involvement in human life (Psalm 139:13-16).

This is a recognition by the psalmist of the fact that he was created by God. The statement “fashioned me”, reminds me of the fact that God reached into the dust of the earth and formed and fashioned a clay doll that He called man. He breathed the breath of life in that clay doll, and he became a living soul.

Genesis 2:7 "And the LORD God formed man [of] the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

He is saying, God you made me, so it is in your power to give me understanding. This is very much like Jesus opening the understanding of the disciples. He does not just want to read the commandments, but he wants to understand what they are saying.

Psalm 119:74 "They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word."

In outward prosperity, delivered from all troubles. Set on the throne of Israel, and at rest from all enemies round about. And in spiritual prosperity, being illuminated by the Spirit of God, having a spiritual understanding of divine things. An obedience of faith to the commands of God, in the lively exercise of grace upon him, in comfortable frames of soul, and flourishing circumstances. Now they that fear the Lord, that have the grace of fear in their hearts, and are true worshippers of God. As they delight to meet together, and are glad to see one another; so they rejoice in each other's prosperity, especially spiritual (see Psalm 34:1).

"Because I have hoped in thy Word. In Christ the essential Word, the hope of Israel. In the written word, which gives encouragement to hope. In the word of promise, on which he was caused to hope. And in which hope he was confirmed, and not disappointed, and so it made him not ashamed. And others rejoiced at it, because it was an encouragement to their faith and hope likewise.

"They that fear Thee", is possibly speaking of those who hold God in high esteem. When God opens our understanding to His teachings, we should share it with others, so that they might understand too. I love Bible study where everyone shares what God has revealed to them. We can all help each other, if we will do this. Christians should be overjoyed that God has revealed something to someone. There is no place for jealousy among believers. It seems here that the Lord revealed the truth to him, because he placed his hope in the Word. Diligently study the Bible, and you will be amazed what God will reveal to you.

Psalm 119:75 "I know, O LORD, that thy judgments [are] right, and [that] thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me."

"Thou ... has afflicted me": The psalmist expresses his confidence in God's sovereignty over human affliction referred to in (119:67, 71; compare Deut. 32:39; Isa. 45:7; Lam. 3:37-38).

He trusts the fact that God would not allow anything to come upon him that was not for his own good. Many times, afflictions make us closer to God. We pray more, when there is a problem in our life.

Romans 5:3-5 "And not only [so], but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;" "And patience, experience; and experience, hope:" "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."

Even Paul had a thorn in his flesh. We will see what Paul has to say the reason for his affliction was.

2 Corinthians 12:7 "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure."

Afflictions are sometimes for our good. Neither the psalmist here, or Paul, questioned the judgement of God in their afflictions.

Psalm 119:76 "Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant."

Shown in the provision and promise of a Savior. In the forgiveness of sins through him; a discovery and application of which yields comfort under afflictions.

"According to thy word unto thy servant": A word of promise, in which he had assured him of his love, grace, mercy, and kindness. And that he would continue it to him, and comfort him with it. To make such a promise, and show such favor, was an instance of condescending grace to him, who was but his servant, and unworthy of his regard.

The psalmist here, is not asking God to remove the affliction, he is just asking him to make it possible for him to go through the affliction. He is even saying, help me to find comfort in the affliction. God does not mind us reminding Him of His Word. In fact, He likes to know that we know what His Word says.

Psalm 119:77 "Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law [is] my delight."

As I am not able to come unto them. But the wicked will be confounded.

"That I may live": It is evident that this was uttered in view of some great calamity by which his life was threatened. He was dependent for life, for recovery from sickness, or for deliverance from danger, wholly on the compassion of God.

"For thy law is my delight" (see notes at Psalm 119:16; compare Psalms 119:24, 119:47). This is urged here as a reason for the divine interposition. The meaning is, that he was a friend of God. That he had pleasure in his service and in his commandments; and that he might, therefore, with propriety, appeal to God to interpose in his behalf. This is a proper ground of appeal to God in our prayers, not on the ground of merit or claim, but because we may reasonably suppose that God will be disposed to protect his friends. And to deliver them in the day of trouble.

Notice that he has added the word tender to the mercies of God. This type mercy would be the kind a loving Father would show to His young child. Well is that not what the believers are? Whatever this affliction is, it is so severe that he believes he might die. He is not ready to die, and asks that his life be spared. Again, he reminds God that God's law is not grievous to him.

Psalm 119:78 "Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: [but] I will meditate in thy precepts."

Referring here to his enemies, who appear to have been in the higher ranks of life, or to have been those who prided themselves on their wealth, their station, or their influence (see notes at Psalm 119:51). The psalmist asks here that they might be confounded or put to shame. That is, that they might fail of accomplishing their purposes in regard to him (see notes on Psalm 25:2-3; and Job 6:20).

"For they dealt perversely with me": They were not honest; they deceived me; they took advantage of me; they were not true to their professions of friendship (compare the notes at Isa. 59:3; Job 8:3; 34:12).

"Without a cause": Hebrew, "by a lie." That is, they have been guilty of falsehood in their charges or accusations against me. I have given them no occasion for such treatment, and their conduct is based on an entire misrepresentation (see notes at John 15:25).

"But I will meditate in thy precepts" (see notes at Psalm 1:2). I will not be diverted from thee, from thy law, from thy service, by all that man can do to me. By all the false charges which the enemies of religion may bring against me. By all the contempt or persecution that I may suffer for my attachment to thee (see notes on Psalms 119:23; 119:69).

Perversely in this Scripture, means to make crooked. This means that they deceived him in their dealings with them. We remember who the proud are. They are too proud to humble themselves and receive the Lord. They are lost. This would be a common practice of someone who was lost. They would have no conscience, and they would do whatever it took to benefit them. He is saying, that even though they dealt with him in a crooked manner, he will not do the same to them, because he remembers the teachings of God's law. He is saying, I will do it your way, Lord.

Psalm 119:79 "Let those that fear thee turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies."

Let thy friends be my friends. Let them show me favor, and count me among their companions. If the great and the powerful turn away from me; if they persecute me, and do me wrong; if they cast out my name as evil, and are unwilling to associate with me, yet let thy friends, however poor and humble, regard me with kindness. And reckon me among their number, and I shall be satisfied.

"And those that have known thy testimonies": Thy law. Those who can see and appreciate the beauty of thy commandments. This is the ground of true friendship in religion, the common love of God, of his law, and of his service. This is a permanent ground of affection. All friendship founded on earthly distinctions; all derived from titled birth, from rank, from affluence, from civil, military, or naval renown, from beauty, strength, or nobleness of form, must be temporary. But that which is founded on attachment to God, to his law, and to the Savior, will abide forever.

"Those that fear thee" here, are possibly speaking of those who hold God in high esteem. The psalmist here, is saying for God to cause those who believe in God, to come and line up with him. Christians should forgive their Christian brothers and sisters and take them back in the fold, if they turn away from some sin they have committed.

Psalm 119:80 "Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed."

Or "perfect", and sincere. He desires that he might have a sincere regard to the ways and worship, ordinances and commands, of God. That he might have a cordial affection for them, and observe them. Not in show and appearance only, but heartily as to the Lord, and in reality and truth, like an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.

"That I be not ashamed": Before men, conscious of guilt; or before God, at the throne of grace. Where a believer sometimes is ashamed to come, not having had that regard to the statutes of the Lord he should have had, and that he might not be ashamed before him at the last day. But have confidence, having the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and the true grace of God implanted in him. Which engaged him to a regard to all his commandments.

We have said over and over, that we are what our heart is. The most important thing is to be right in our own heart. This is even more important than having others come and stand with you. To be sound of heart, would mean that the heart was not sick with sin. Only those who have a conscience, are ashamed when things are not right.

CAPH

“All thy commandments are faithful”

Verses 81-88: The psalmist sought deliverance from his sins, his foes, and his fears. Hope deferred made him faint; his eyes failed by looking out for this expected salvation. But when the eyes fail, yet faith must not. His affliction was great. He was become like a leathern bottle, which, if hung up in the smoke, is dried and shriveled up. We must ever be mindful of God's statutes. The days of the believer's mourning shall be ended; they are but for a moment, compared with eternal happiness. His enemies used craft as well as power for his ruin, in contempt of the law of God. The commandments of God are true and faithful guides in the path of peace and safety. We may best expect help from God when, like our Master, we do well and suffer for it. Wicked men may almost consume the believer upon earth, but he would sooner forsake all than forsake the word of the Lord. We should depend upon the grace of God for strength to do every good work. The surest token of God's good-will toward us, is his good work in us.

Psalm 119:81 "My soul fainteth for thy salvation: [but] I hope in thy word."

CAPH: The Eleventh Part.

Either for temporal salvation and deliverance from enemies; which, being promised, was expected by him from the Lord. But not coming so soon as looked for, his spirits began to sink and faint. Or for spiritual and eternal salvation, for a view of interest in it, for the joys and comforts of it, and for the full possession of it in heaven. And, particularly, for the promised Messiah, the author of it, often called the Salvation of God, because prepared and appointed by him to be the author of it. Of him there was a promise, which gave the Old Testament saints reason to expect him, and for him they waited. His coming they earnestly wished for, but being long deferred, were sometimes out of heart, and ready to faint, which was here David's case.

"But I hope in thy word": The word of promise concerning deliverance and salvation, especially by the Messiah, which supported him, and kept him from fainting. That being firm and sure, for ever settled in heaven, and has the oath of God annexed to it, for the confirmation of it. And God is faithful that has promised, and is also able to perform. So that his word lays a solid foundation for faith and hope.

His soul desired salvation to the point that he almost fainted trying to get it. He placed his hope in the Word of God. He knew that the Word of God promised salvation to whosoever would take it. He was depending on that promise, because he knew the Word of God was true.

Psalm 119:82 "Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?"

Either with looking for the Messiah, the essential Word, that was to be, and afterwards was made flesh, and dwelt among men. Or for the fulfilment of the word of promise, on which he was made to hope. But that being deferred; and he believing in hope against hope, and looking out continually till it was accomplished, his eyes grew weary, and failed him. And he was just ready to give up all expectation of it (see Psalm 77:8).

"Saying, when wilt thou comfort me?" The people of God are sometimes very disconsolate, and need comforting. Through the prevalence of sin, the power of Satan's temptations, the hidings of God's face, and a variety of afflictions. When they apply to God for comfort, who only can comfort them, and who has his set times to do it. But they are apt to think it long, and inquire, as David here, when it will be.

Have you ever read the Word of God until the words all seemed to run together? This is probably, what he is saying here. He is searching the Word of God finding a promise that can comfort him and give him hope.

Psalm 119:83 "For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; [yet] do I not forget thy statutes."

"Like a bottle in the smoke": Just as smoke will dry out, stiffen, and crack a wineskin thus making it useless, so the psalmist's affliction has debilitated him.

This bottle is probably not made of glass, but leather. If leather gets near a fire, it will dry it out and probably cause it to leak. A cracked bottle would be of very little use. He is saying, I am all dried up and of very little use to anyone, but I have not forgotten your Word.

Psalm 119:84 "How many [are] the days of thy servant? when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?"

If this is to be understood of the days of his life, they were very few, as the days of every man be. And if of his days of joy and comfort, peace and prosperity, they were fewer still. But if of days of adversity and affliction, which seems to be the sense, they were many indeed.

"When wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?" Good men have their persecutors. There is a judgment that will be executed on them, if not here, yet hereafter. It is a righteous thing with God to do it. It is often deferred when the saints, through zeal for the glory of God, and the honor of his justice. As well as for their own deliverance and comfort, are at times somewhat impatient for it, and earnestly solicit it, as the psalmist here (see Rev. 6:9).

He is asking, how long is he going to live and be persecuted by his enemies. When will you take vengeance on them that persecute me? He reminds God that he is His servant. He knows that God has taught that He would take vengeance for his servants. They are not to do it themselves.

Psalm 119:85 "The proud have digged pits for me, which [are] not after thy law."

Laid snares and temptations in his way, to draw him into sin, and so into mischief. They sought indeed to take away his life, and formed schemes for it. The allusion is to the digging of pits for the taking of wild beasts; which shows the ill opinion they had of David, and their ill usage of him (see Psalm 7:15).

"Which are not after thy law": No, contrary to it; which forbids the digging of a pit, and leaving it uncovered, so that a neighbor's beast might fall into it (Exodus 21:33). And if those might not be dug to the injury of beasts, then much less to the injury of men, to the hurt of the servants of the Lord, or to the shedding of innocent blood, which the law forbids.

God knows that the proud are not followers of His law. He did not need the psalmist to remind him. He tells God that these evil, worldly people have dug a pit to throw him in. Whether these pits were for his body after he died, or just a pit to hold him prisoner in, is not explained.

Psalm 119:86 "All thy commandments [are] faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me."

Or, "faithfulness" they are made by a faithful God, who is holy, just, and true. They command faithfulness, sincerity, and uprightness; and require men to love their neighbors as themselves, and to do all they do faithfully, cordially, and affectionately. They are to be done in truth and faithfulness, in charity, out of a pure heart, and faith unfeigned. And therefore to dig pits for men must not be after, but contrary, to the law of God.

"They persecute me wrongfully": Without a cause, purely out of ill will and for religion's sake. Which, as it is an argument with the saints to bear persecution patiently, it is used as an argument with the Lord, to arise and appear on the behalf of his persecuted ones, as follows:

"Help thou me": Against my persecutors, and out of their hands. God is able to help his people; he has promised to do it. It may be expected from him; and he is a present help in time of trouble. This is a suitable petition in the mouths of God's people, and should be a prayer of faith.

God's enemies and the enemies of the psalmist are the same. The psalmist is explaining to God that he was not guilty of the things they accused him of. He also reminds the Lord that he would not have done the evil thing they accuse him of, because he lived by God's commandments. He says, I know your commandments are faithful and I would not sin against You.

Psalm 119:87 "They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts."

Almost destroyed his good name, wasted his substance, took away his crown and kingdom, and even his life. It was within a little of it, his soul had almost dwelt in silence. They had almost cast

him down to the ground, and left him there. But all this was only on earth; they could not reach any thing that belonged to him in heaven. Not his name, which was written there in the Lamb's book of life. Nor his riches and inheritance there, the never fading crown of glory laid up for him there. Or that eternal life, which is hid with Christ in God for him.

"But I forsook not thy precepts": Did not decline the service and worship of God, nor neglect his word and ordinances. Though thus persecuted, and all these things came upon him for the sake of religion (see Psalm 44:17).

Even though it seemed he would die at their hand, he would not turn away from the teachings of God to stop them.

Psalm 119:88 "Quicken me after thy lovingkindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth."

According to it, and with it. Let me have some discoveries of it, and of interest in it. And that will quicken me, revive and comfort me, under all the reproaches, ill usage, and persecutions of men. The love of God shed abroad in the heart comforts and supports under all sorts of afflictions. It quickens the graces of the Spirit, and brings them forth into lively exercise, as faith, hope, and love. And to a diligent and fervent discharge of every duty. It constrains to love the Lord, and live to him, to his glory, in obedience to his will.

"So shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth": The word of God, which comes out of his mouth, testifies of him, and of his mind and will. And which is to be received and observed, as being greater than the testimony of men (1 John 5:9).

We said in an earlier lesson, that the testimony of Thy mouth would be the spoken Word. To quicken is to make alive. When Jesus quickens man, it is the spirit that is quickened. You love me and are kind to me, so make me alive in my spirit, is what the psalmist is saying. He also says, if the Lord does this, he will speak the Word to the people. This has been a mournful cry to God, because of the affliction he suffered. It seems the worldly people around him had taken advantage of the fact that he was afflicted, and they cheated him on every hand. This cry is that God will take vengeance on the psalmist's enemy, who is also the enemy of God.

Psalm 119 (verses 73-88) Questions

1. What does the psalmist recognize God as, in verse 73?
2. What was he asking God to give him?
3. Why did he want this gift from God?
4. What was man formed of?
5. When did man become a living soul?

6. Who will be glad when they see him?
7. Who is it speaking of when it says, they that fear thee?
8. When God opens our understanding to His truths, what should we do with it?
9. Why had God revealed it to him?
10. I know that thy judgements are _____.
11. Why did Paul say that God had not removed the thorn in his flesh?
12. In verse 76, what is he asking the Lord to do?
13. What word did he add to the mercies, that showed the psalmist was God's child?
14. How severe does the psalmist believe his affliction is?
15. Perversely means what?
16. Why does the psalmist not do the same thing as these who cheated him?
17. Who does the psalmist want to line up with him?
18. What does being sound of heart mean?
19. Why was his heart about to faint?
20. What does it mean in verse 82 saying, Mine eyes fail for thy word?
21. What kind of bottle is verse 83 speaking of?
22. Who digged the pits for him?
23. What were they going to do with the pits?
24. Was the psalmist guilty of the things he was being persecuted for?
25. Quicken me after thy _____.
26. What is the testimony of thy mouth?