

THE WAY OF TRUTH

Psalm 119:25-32

Intro: Throughout Psalm 119 the psalmist mentions “way” or “ways” eighteen times. Six, or one third of them are found here in Daleth, the fourth stanza. Actually he used two Hebrew words, but the lexicons do not seem to distinguish between them. However, in the stanza that we are considering tonight, the psalmist used just one of the words, the most common of the two, the word *derek*.

In meaning it is very similar to the word *walk* because it has to do with *the way a person lives*. There are basically two ways that people throughout the world live. The vast majority live the way they want to live. We could call these *the ways of men*. They differ very widely from person to person, but we can call all of them *ungodly* because people who do not know the Lord are not concerned about what is pleasing to God, or displeasing to Him. And you have already thought of the other way people live because it is the way that most of you live, or want to live.

The Lord was expressing the difference between man’s ways and God’s ways through the prophet Isaiah when He said,

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 (Isa. 55:6-9).

The wicked has his own way of living, but it is not God’s way. There is a tremendous difference between man’s ways and God’s ways. One of Judah many problems in Isaiah’s day, in fact in all of the days when the prophets preached or wrote, or both, even those who claimed to be the people of God had drifted into the ways of wicked men, and had forsaken God’s ways.

Now the only source of information that we have about God’s ways, is in the Bible. And the opposition that we are seeing today to the Bible, is an indication of how much people who don’t know the Lord actually hate the

ways of the Lord. We learned this morning in our SS lesson in Isaiah that people were inclined to treat truth as relative even in those days, as they are doing today. People like to be left to their own thoughts as to what is right and wrong. So when we talk about abortion, or homosexual living, or lying, or even in most cases, adultery, and we base our comments on what the Bible says, we can get ourselves into big trouble. And I am sure that we as Christians need to understand this. We don't need to back down in talking about what we believe, but we need to understand why people disagree with us, and disagree so strongly.

As this wonderful Psalm begins, and I have reminded you of this each week, the Lord promised blessing to those who were "undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." And in verse 2 happiness is promised to those who "keep His testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart." And we have noted in the first three stanzas that the psalmist has been happy. He has been rejoicing in the Word, delighting in the truth of God. But when we come to this fourth stanza, things have changed.

In verse 25, right at the beginning of this stanza we read, "My soul cleaveth to the dust." And in verse 28 he wrote, "My soul melteth for heaviness." One expositor has rendered the first as "depressed to the dust is my soul," and the second as "dropping is my soul from heaviness."

If you have ever been depressed you know how hard it is to throw it off. The Psalmist was indicating that he was flat on the ground as far as his soul was concerned, and it seemed like the dust was hanging on to him so that he could not get up.

For the psalmist's soul to melt for heaviness means much the same as what he expressed in verse 25. He was brokenhearted. His soul was melting away, meaning that he felt that he might die so great was his sorrow.

So we have here a great contrast with the beginning of the Psalm and the prospect for great happiness. Something has been going on in the life of the psalmist which has robbed him of his joy and replaced it with the deepest sorrow. What had happened?

Well, I think that most of us, if we have known the Lord for several years especially, have found ourselves in the same position. I have often heard

people say that they thought when they became a Christian that they were so happy they would never be sad again. We know, don't we, that the Christian life is the happiest life that it is possible to live in this world. That does not mean that it will be trouble-free, but it does mean that the Lord gives us joy in the midst of our trials, and often in our sorrows. We may have times when we are discouraged, but the case of the Psalmist in this stanza had reached emergency proportions – and it demanded some answers.

One thing that is encouraging about what the Psalmist wrote is that he knew where to go for help. Most Christians do know, but unfortunately it is often true that they don't where they need to go. The Psalmist needed to go to the Lord, and there is only one way that he could go to the Lord, and there is only one way that we can go to the Lord today. Do you know what it is? We go to the Lord by going to His Word. That is why the psalmist said, or I should say, prayed, "Quicken Thou me according to Thy word." Remember that the Bible is called God's "word" because it is through the Bible that He speaks to us. It is through the Bible that He ministers to us. It is through the Bible that He helps us.

But now look at what the psalmist said in verse 26: "I have declared my ways, and Thou heardest me." This is the only time in this psalm that he mentioned "my ways." He does mention in verse 29, "the way of lying," which may be a hint as to what was at least part of his problem. But it seems from the text that the psalmist, for reasons that he does not explain, had gotten careless about his reading of the Word, and his obedience to the Word, and over time had gradually slipped away from the ways of the Lord, and was living a life which he could best describe as "my ways."

I have reminded you before of the verse in Proverbs which explains why Solomon who was such a wise man, died as a fool. Actually there are two verses in the same chapter. They are Prov.19:20 and 27. I am reading them as they appear in the NKJV.

20 Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.

And then,

27 Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.

The Psalmist had wisely confessed his ways to the Lord, and he knew that the Lord had heard him, and so now he prayed, "Teach me Thy statutes."

Remember that “statutes” speaks of the manner in which God gave the Law to Moses, but the same applies to all of the Word of God. It is as though the whole Bible was engraved in stone. God’s Word never changes. It is that which has been ordained and prescribed by God Himself. We may drift away from it, but it never changes. So that the way that we found joy in the beginning, is the way we go to get it back. I am not talking about being saved a second time, but about going back to the Lord and to live according to His Word.

Verse 27 shows how anxious the psalmist was to get back to the Lord. He prayed, “Make me to understand the way of thy precepts.” Precepts are injunctions, and it emphasizes the importance of the specific details of the Word. The Psalmist felt that he had not given proper attention to God’s Word, and he wanted the Lord to teach him again. When we get to that place in our thinking, relief is very close at hand. When we are really learning what is in the Word of God, it changes our speech. We talk about the Lord’s “wondrous works,” and this has a very important effect upon the way we live. His works reveal His ways.

As we have seen, in verse 28 he repeats his trouble to the Lord, and asks to be strengthened by God’s word – that which God speaks to His own soul. This is the way that we need to treat the Bible. Make it personal. Receive it as though it was written especially *for* you even though it may not have been originally written *to* you. And it is in treating God’s word in this way that we are strengthened by it.

Now in verse 29 we see what had been his major problem. “The way of lying” is descriptive of the ways of man. We have all done it. Even in our relationship with the Lord, we have done it. We have promised the Lord that we would trust Him, and then we don’t. We say that we want His will to be done in our lives, but then we go our own way. Lying, dishonesty, has many forms. Do you know that you can be lying when you are singing a hymn? Lying is a way of life in the world. But how tragic it is when it makes it way back into our lives. The best way to keep lying out is to keep the Word in.

It is importance to see how the psalmist speaks of the Word of God all through his appeal to God in this stanza. I have mentioned before that “law” became a word that was descriptive of all of Scripture, not just the law of Moses. God’s Word is law because it is the revelation of God’s will, God’s way, for man. It is not optional but binding upon us all. But

the Psalmist appeals for God to deal with him graciously. In seeking forgiveness He knew that God's grace would be poured out upon him. God does not deal with us according to our sins, as David said in Psalm 51, but He gives us blessings which we could never deserve. In this Psalm we see an OT prodigal coming back to the Lord. We have no reason to believe that he had indulged in the grosser sins, but any sin is enough to rob us of our joy in the Lord. We never get beyond the place where we can do without the amazing grace of God.

Now notice the transformation that the psalmist expressed in the last three verses of this stanza. One writer pointed out that there is a real progression to be observed in his words:

V. 30: "I have chosen . . ."

V. 31: "I have stuck . . ."

V. 32: "I will run . . ."

He chose "the way of truth." The Word is truth. It is the revelation of God's way for us, and it never changes from generation to generation. The Lord Jesus is "the truth." And in His prayer in John 17 He prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth."

God's way is the only right way, and we always will live to regret it when we turn away from the Word of God in even the smallest ways. The Psalmist chose "the way of truth." He took God's judgments between what is good and what is evil, what is right and what is wrong, as the absolute truth, not relative in any way.

"I have stuck" is the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. This is the clearest evidence that a person is really saved. He takes the Word as the very testimony of God Himself, a testimony that is never wrong, and a testimony that never changes.

Finally, the stanza closes with a statement of his dependence upon the Lord. Running suggests an eagerness to obey God, a delight, a putting forth of all of his strength to be faithful to the Lord. But his experience has taught him that he will only be faithful if the Lord will "enlarge his heart." By this he meant if the Lord would just increase his capacity to love the Lord more, and to love His Word, always putting that first so that God might be glorified and he would remain faithful.

May the Lord teach us from the psalmist's experience so that we will not

have to go through what he went through to learn what he learned. “Sin will keep us from God’s Word, or God’s Word will keep us from sin. Each of us must decide which it will be for us.

God tells us about the failures of His servants, not to expose them, but that we may learn from their failures so that we will not make the same mistakes ourselves.

So there is nothing more important for any of us than that we are daily reading the Word, learning the truth, and walking in God’s way instead of our own.