

MAKING THE LORD OUR PORTION

Psalm 119:57-64

Intro: This eighth stanza of Psalm 119 has to do with the Lord as our Portion. The beginning of verse 1 would be better translated, “O Lord, my Portion.” The dictionary defines the word *portion* as “the part of an estate received by an heir” (*Webster’s New World Dictionary*, p. 580). And the fact that this is the meaning of this word *portion* here in Psa. 119:57, is confirmed by what David wrote in Psa. 16:5 where the word *portion* is actually translated, “inheritance.”

5 The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup:
thou maintainest my lot.

“Portion” in this verse mean *the part* of my inheritance.

The same truth is found in Eph. 1:11 where Paul, speaking of Christ, wrote, “In whom also we have an inheritance ...”

We all know, or should know that as believers we are “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17). We are heirs of salvation and of all of the blessings which come to us because we are saved. But even back in OT times, David, writing by the Holy Spirit, did not distinguish between our inheritance, as believers, and God! He is our inheritance. He is our portion. God has given Himself to us. In being saved we have inherited God, and Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit – all of the Persons of the Triune Godhead! There is a lot of difference between treating salvation as merely a gift from God, as compared with treating our salvation as God giving Himself to us as our inheritance. It takes some time in thinking about this distinction, but it is well worth all of the time that we give to it. We talk about God as our Savior, or Christ as our Savior; it is just as true to the Word to say that God is our salvation, and Christ is our salvation. In saving us God has given Himself to us, and so all of the resources that are in God belong to us. It is wonderful to know that we belong to God, but God wants us to know also that He belongs to us.

This is grace abundant! And it is amazing to see that David understood this truth. But he surely was not the only OT saint who understood this. But the point now is, Do we understand it? When David wrote, “O Lord, my Portion,” he was not just speaking for himself, but he was speaking for all of us. God is so great that He is the portion, the inheritance, of all of His people. He is your Portion. He is my Portion. Let us make sure that we understand this.

However, it is one thing to know this truth; it is another thing to be living as though we recognize that we have such an inheritance, such a God Who has given Himself to us. This stanza shows us how this truth had affected the life of the one who wrote Psalm 119, probably King David, and we need to make sure that it is affecting our lives in the same way.

For the Lord to be our inheritance did not make the Lord subservient to David, but it made David realize that He could not live without God's blessing, that he needed to be constantly concerned about his relationship with God, and that he was in reality making the Lord his Portion in his daily life.

It is important to notice that in our English translation of this stanza we have the personal pronoun "I" eight times! This is how David was acting upon this great truth, that the Lord was his Portion, his Inheritance.

Where did he begin? Look at verse 57. This has to do with:

I. OBEDIENCE (Psa. 119:57).

The one thing that OT saints had the greatest problem with, was obeying the Lord. But this is the first thing that every child of God needs to be concerned about from the time we are saved throughout the rest of our lives – obeying the Lord.

But obeying the Lord is not easy. In fact, consistent obedience is impossible. Nevertheless, David was not saying that he would obey the words of God in his own strength. He was saying, he had just said, that the Lord was his Portion, and therefore on the basis of the strength that he would receive from the Lord, he pledged himself to a life of obedience. That is one reason that David is called in Scripture, a man after God's heart.

Phil. 2:12 and 13 give us the NT version of this great truth. Remember that for the Scriptures to be referred to as the Word, or words, of God, means that the Psalmist was including all that God had been pleased to reveal as to the way His people should live.

How often have we declared ourselves about holding fast to all of God's Word? The idea in this word "keep" is also that of guarding it. David could not guard the way others might treat the Word, but by God's grace he could guard it all in his life – the truth, the commands, the promises.

What did the psalmist mention next?

II. PRAYER (Psa. 119:58).

When we understand that the Lord has given Himself to us, perhaps we can understand how it grieves the Lord when hour after hour, and possibly day after day, we fail to plead with Him for the favor of His presence and fellowship. He has given Himself to us, meaning that He is available any hour of any day, and He wants us to come. He wants us to feel our need of Him. He is ready to bless, but often we don't take what He will give to us. David sought the Lord with his whole heart. There was nothing that David wanted more than the Lord Himself – not just His blessings, but the Lord!

And when the psalmist pled with God, it was for His mercy. Life can be, and always will be, very miserable without the mercy of God. So in our trials we should realize that those are the times when we should especially turn to the Lord for His mercy.

But let us go on to verse 59. Here is another important thing for all of us to do regularly.

III. SELF-EXAMINATION (Psa. 119:59-60).

How often do we do this, taking stock of where we are spiritually? This is what led David to pray Psa. 19:14 and Psa. 139:23-24. Isaiah has taught us that our ways and God's ways are not at all alike. The child of God who is making the Lord his Portion in practical experience will want to be sure that he is doing the work of the Lord in the way the Lord has ordained that it be done. It is easy to drift away from God's ways. We need to turn our feet into His testimonies. We need to pay attention to the warnings of God in Scripture and we need to stand by the high standards for daily living that are established by the testimonies of God. There is always the pressure to compromise, a word that politicians use all of the time. The child of God who is making the Lord his Portion will never compromise either with sin, or with the truth.

IV. BEHAVIOR TOWARD HIS ENEMIES (Psa. 119:61).

As I have mentioned before, and others have said the same, this world is not a friend to godly living, not a friend to the grace of God. If we could

be exempt from the wickedness of others, that would be wonderful. But often the child of God is the target, putting obstacles and restrictions in the way of godly living. Think of the criticism our President faces when he makes any remarks that have to do with the Lord. Or Secretary Ashcroft. The wicked are usually not satisfied unless they make someone else fall. We, being human, are inclined to fight back, to get even, to even the score. But the child of God who knows that the Lord is his Portion, remembers the law of God so as to be careful not to retaliate like a non-Christian would.

V. THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S WAYS (Psa. 119:62).

Cf. verse 55 in the preceding stanza. Perhaps in this verse the psalmist still had in mind verse 61. It's not normal for us to be up at midnight. But sometimes we can't sleep because of things that trouble us. What do we do to get back to sleep. David recommended thanksgiving, thanksgiving to God. For what? For the Word. Especially here for God's "righteous ordinances." These are the "judgment" of the Lord. It is the conviction that is brought to our hearts by Scripture that God always does the right thing at the right time and in the right way. And even when we haven't seen Him work in a given situation, we know that He will never be too late, and what He does will always be totally right!

This is why we can sing, "Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, just to take Him at His Word, just to rest upon His promise, just to know, thus saith the Lord."

VI. THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE SAINTS (Psa. 119:63).

Isn't it interesting to find this here when we are thinking about the Lord, not His people, as our Portion? Why is this? It is because some of our greatest blessings come from God to us through His people. David needed the fellowship and encouragement of the Lord's people. Think of how he was blessed by those who stood by him when Absalom led his revolt against his father, David. When in need especially, the King stood on the same ground as the lowliest of the saints. When David said that he was a companion of those who feared the Lord, he meant that he was knit together in fellowship with them.

So while much of our dealing with the Lord is strictly personal, there are always times when we must have the blessing which God gives us

through His people.

VII. HIS OUTLOOK (Psa. 119:64).

I hardly knew what title to give to this verse, but the idea is beautifully expressed in the hymn, “Loved With Everlasting Love.” All of the verses are good, but the second verse, I believe, expresses what the psalmist had in mind with the last lines of this stanza – in verse 64.

Here is the verse I am thinking about:

Heav’n above is softer blue, Earth around is sweeter green!
Something lives in every hue Christless eyes have never seen:
Birds with gladder songs o’er flow,
Flow’rs with deeper beauties shine,
Since I know as now I know, I am His, and He is mine.

See how the psalmist expressed the joy of his heart. “The earth, O Lord, is full of Thy mercy.” Everywhere he looked because he had made the Lord his Portion, he saw evidence of the mercy of God.

And so he wanted to know more. “Teach me Thy Statutes.” This speaks of the Word with its unchanging permanence, which will never pass away.

Concl: For all of us who know the Lord, He is our Inheritance and our Portion. But others may see the evidence of this great truth by the way we live. Let us take this stanza and make it our own as we learn to draw upon the exhaustless resources of our God every day and in every situation.