

LIGHT IN A SINFUL WORLD

Psalm 119:105-112

Intro: No one needs to tell us that Psalm 119 is a *Psalm of the Word*.

Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that it is *the Psalm of the Word*. By its very length no other passage of Scripture can surpass it in its emphasis upon the Word of God. However, the farther we go in the Psalm, the greater seems to be the psalmist's delight in the Word of God.

We cannot be reminded too often that this is God's Word, and it is His Word *to us* regardless of what might be the time of our existence, or the place of our existence on the earth. God's Word is uniquely His gift to His people. He may have used people to give it to us, but they all wrote as they were directed by the Spirit of God. They didn't include anything that He did not reveal to them, nor did they omit anything that the Lord wanted to say to us.

But there are great differences among the Lord's people with regard to the Bible. And those differences have to do with what we do with the Word. If we go back just two stanzas we can see a certain progression in the psalmist's attitude and relationship with the Word of God. For example, in verse 89 we have a statement of doctrine. And this applies to all parts of Scripture. The whole is "settled in heaven." It is stationary. It will not be changed. It never has been revised, nor will it be. It will remain what it is for ever.

When we move on to verse 97 we see how the psalmist has learned to love the Word. This comes by reading it, and meditating on it. It is probably the case that there are comparatively few who have learned to love the Word like the Psalmist did. This was the result of the place that he gave it in his thoughts all day every day.

But then when we come to this fourteenth stanza we learn that the psalmist had made a decision regarding the Word of God. It had come to be to him "a lamp" for his feet, and "a light" for His path. The "lamp" may be as small as a candle, but it always gave him clear guidance as to the way that he should take.

This means that the psalmist had made a decision, an important decision. He had taken God's Word as the source of guidance for His life, not only to point out the way he should go, but to guide him along the way, that

which he called, “my path.”

Lamps and lights are needed especially when it is dark. They help us to stay in the right path as well as keeping us from the wrong paths. He had found that he had never been misguided by the Word, and so he had made it permanent source of guidance. And this was like being able to confer with God Himself about every decision in his life. He had found that the Word of God was totally reliable in every situation that he faced – and he faced decisions every day that he made in accordance with the Word.

This is the keynote of this stanza. As I have said, the Word can be this to all of us, but not everyone among the Lord’s people made use of it the way the psalmist did. I hope you see how important it is to be able to say truthfully what the psalmist said here. This solves a lot of problems. We may confer with other believers about decisions which we make, but the advice that we are to value above all others is that which we get from God’s Word!

Now, having seen how the psalmist felt about the Word, and how he used it to guide him through his life in this dark world, in verses 106 through 112 we see how it worked out in his daily life.

Notice that in verse 105 the psalmist was speaking to the Lord. And in verse 106 he continues speaking to the Lord. We know, and undoubtedly the psalmist knew, that our promises don’t mean much unless we make them depending upon the grace of God to make us faithful. But the language in this verse indicates his strong determination, with the help and blessing of God, that in all of his life he wanted to let the Lord make his decisions for him, and also to give him the grace to be faithful.

It is wonderful to know that since we are dealing with God’s Word, we don’t have to consider in any situation if it is right. God’s Word is always right. It cannot be wrong. And He has promised to guide us continually. In fact, He leads us constantly as we learn from Psalm 23.

Now we might feel, as I think I have expressed before, that this would mean that we would have a trouble-free life, or one that is almost like that. But the psalmist found out that his determination to be guided by God through His Word was the very thing that brought affliction his way. The world really has no place for the Word of God. People in the world

are blinded to the truth. It is foolishness to them. But what effect did his affliction have on him. It was designed by his enemies to get him to turn away from the Word. But instead he turned to the Word more than ever before to be quickened, to be strengthened, to be faithful in doing the will of God. God's Word is a living Word, a life-giving Word. And it is by going back to the Word, to concentrate of God and His promises, that we are enabled to stand against even "the wiles of the Devil."

Notice the psalmist humility in verse 108. Instead of turning away from the Lord, he found that he was humbled before the Lord, and that he came to a deeper realization than ever before what an amazing thing it is that we can even offer our praise to Him. He may not have known the truth of Heb. 13:15, but, if not, it was here that he came close to it. We know now that even our praise is acceptable only when offered through our Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, and our glorious Mediator with God.

But another interesting point is brought out in verse 108. And that was that he needed to receive more teaching. There is no more dangerous time in a believer's life than when he, or she, begins to feel that he has learned all that he needs to know. The truth is inexhaustible, and so our need to be taught is unending in this life. Dr. Chafer, who had a great influence in my life, used to come to class in his old age to tell us of some fresh insight into the Word, or some new blessing he had gotten from the Word *that very morning* as he spent time reading his Bible. We must never stop learning. When we stop learning, we stop growing.

It would be wonderful if we all would learn the truth the psalmist expressed in verse 109. He was not saying that his soul was not in God's hand, but he was emphasizing how important his own actions were regarding his own life from day to day. This is what God used to make him realize how important it was for him to be feeding his soul on the Word every day. What you and I do about our Bible reading, and about our praying, will be seen in the spiritual condition of our souls. And we have no one to blame but ourselves if we neglect the means that God has provided for our blessing and strengthening through the trials of our lives. We need to make sure that we are taking good care of our souls.

And so what did the psalmist say that he did to help his soul. "Yet do I not forget Thy law." If the psalmist was David, he plenty of things on his mind every day, but he did not forget how important it was for him to be in the Word every day – mainly for the good of his own soul. Those of us

who teach need to be careful lest we go to the Word to have something to say to others, but we are neglecting our own souls.

In all of this the psalmist had to contend with evil men, who purposely set traps for him. The world of people see to it that traps are set in our way, and what is their main objective. It is to lessen our appetite for the Word, and to turn our attention to other things. But again it was the Word which preserved him. However, when a child of God neglects the Word for even a day, he is laying himself open to the traps which the Enemy sets for us. Often the trap is just “busy-ness.” I have mentioned to you before that Alan Redpath, who used to be the pastor of the Moody Church in Chicago, had a motto on the wall of his study which said, “Beware of the barrenness of a busy life.”

But there are also other traps that are set by our enemies.

Verse 111 is very similar to verses 105 and 106. He looked upon God’s testimonies in His Word as his inheritance, and he treasured more than the greatest material inheritance that he could possibly have. He said, “They are the rejoicing of my heart.” This is another way to measure the condition of our spiritual lives. If there are other things that bring us more joy and pleasure than God and His Word, then something is terribly wrong.

To avoid being in trouble, the psalmist said that had made it the chief business of his heart to put the statutes of God first in his life, not just to know them, but to “perform” them – always! And by this he meant, to the end of his life.

Concl: Now we have been learning about the inner life of the man who wrote this Psalm. He has opened his heart to us that we might know what had brought the blessing of God into his life. But the Spirit of God has had another purpose (and maybe this was the psalmist’s other purpose). That second purpose is that we might evaluate our lives with what he has said so that we can truly say as he did at the beginning of this stanza, “Thy Word is a lamp ...”

Let me encourage you also to read the biographies of men and women who walked with God. It will be an encouragement to you in your own walk with the Lord.