

**A CONTINUING HUNGER FOR THE WORD**

Psalm 119:129-136

**Intro:** To my knowledge, no one knows how long it took the psalmist to compose this 119<sup>th</sup> Psalm. We believe that it was written by some person, probably, as I have expressed many times, David. It was basically his prayer. But we also believe that when it came to writing it down, he did it under the guidance, the inspiration of the Spirit of God. So what we have is a part of that body of truth which we call the Word of God, given by inspiration of God.

However, the arrangement of these stanzas, twenty-two of them, according to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, must have taken quite a bit of time – perhaps weeks, even months, or possibly longer. It would be reasonable to think that they were composed in order, that is, aleph first, beth second, and so on through the alphabet.

If what I am saying is true, then they would represent where the psalmist was spiritually over the period that he wrote this.

Now I am saying this because of the verse in this seventeenth stanza which seems to me to suggest the emphasis or title of the entire stanza, which is verse 131, and especially the last part of the verse where he said, “I longed for Thy commandments.” In fact, the whole verse speaks of the way the psalmist delighted in God’s Word. And when a person delights in and longs for the commandments of the Lord, in contrast with the promises of the Word, you can be sure that he truly loved God’s Word. His mouth was open and he was ready for a feast on the truth.

In addition to going through this Psalm in our Sunday night meetings, I happen to be reading this Psalm in my daily Bible reading. And the other day as I was reading the first part of these twenty-two stanzas, I came across this statement in verse 40: “Behold I have longed after thy precepts.” We have learned that the precepts of the Word are the specific details of what God has been pleased to reveal to us. It can apply just as much to the details of the commandments of the Lord as well as to any other part of the Word of God.

The Hebrew verb translated *long*, or *to long*, speaks of the strong desire that he had for the Word of God, and for the God of the Word.

The point that I would make here is that between the fifth stanza and the seventeenth stanza, we find no change in his desire for the Word. That is very commendable in the life of any child of God.

Now tonight as you and I look back over the years that we have known the Lord, how does our present desire for the Word compare with our desire for the Word in times past. Was there ever a time in your life when your love for God's Word, your desire to know it, and to obey it, was greater than it is today. I trust you would be able to say that your desire for the Word has never been greater than it is today. Or that at least you could say, "My love for the Lord and His Word is very much like it always has been. I love to read it. I love to hear it taught, and I really want to live my life every day to please the Lord." Our desire for the Word is a good way to find out where we are spiritually. If it is weak, then we are weak. If it is strong, then we are strong.

Don't you love those words of Jeremiah found in Jer. 15:16?

16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

With all that Jeremiah had to trouble him, and to make him wonder what the Lord was doing with him, he was sustained by the love God had given him for God's Word. Oh, he had his trying times. You will remember from one of our memory verses that at one point in his life he was ready to give up, to quit. He tells us about it in Jer. 20:9:

9 Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.

Once the Word gets in your heart, the Lord won't ever let you get totally away from it.

But it was a different story with the believers in the church at Ephesus as we learn from Revelation, chapter 2. It was a busy, active, orthodox church, and they could easily have felt that things were going along very well. However, the Lord knew differently. He realized that they did not love Him as they had loved Him when they were first drawn to Christ. I hope that cannot be said about Trinity Bible Church, and that it will never be said. But if we detect that our hearts are not as devoted to the Lord as we used to be, it is time to make the changes that we need to make.

Now let us look at this stanza in the light of what I have been saying.

In verse 129 the psalmist referred to the testimonies of the Lord, the clear, simple statements of Scripture, the standards they set, the clear warnings, the whole was in which the will of God has been revealed was nothing short of miraculous. This is what our politicians (most of them) and the masses of American people are missing, and if you tell them what God has declared to be right and wrong, they will take issue with you. But the child of God places his stamp of complete approval on the Word, and realizes that it is a miracle that we have it.

In verse 130 he speaks of any way in which the truth of the Word of God has been opened to him – when it was read and explained. This is a good motto for a church where the Word of God is taught. Simple people are not necessarily dumb, but they are ignorant. They need the light of the Word of God upon their hearts in order that their lives may undergo a real change.

And so in verse 131 the psalmist expressed how he felt about the Word of God. Have you ever seen a picture, or an actual situation, where a bird is holding a worm or some other kind of food over a nest of little birds, and how they have their beaks spread wide open to get the food. That is how we ought to be when we come together to hear the Word of God. And even with the maturity that our psalmist had obviously attained, he still wanted more and more of the Word of God.

Verse 132 shows the value of knowing Biblical history. We see how God has taught His people in the past, how He has led them, how He has protected them, and they have their faith strengthened to know that He is the same God today, just as able to do what He has always done.

In verse 133 we see that constant exposure to the Word does several important things for us:

- 1) It make us realize how dependent we are upon God.
- 2) It causes us to trust the Lord in areas of our lives where we once felt that we were sufficient to meet our own needs.
- 3) It causes us to hate sin, and to plead with the Lord that no sin will ever again hold us as prisoners.

And then in verse 134 we see that the world in which the psalmist lived was a world that was hostile to the Word of God, and to anyone who

believed the Word and sought to live by it. But he doesn't want to be delivered from his enemies so that he will be able to live a trouble-free life. He knows that is impossible. But in the midst of hostility he promised that he would keep, guard, defend the precepts of the Word, every detail of it. Note that we best defend the truth, not by fighting with our enemies, but by being obedient to the Word.

In verse 135 the psalmist makes a connection between the Lord and His Word which is important for all of us to make. He expressed the fact that pleasing the Lord was his mission in the world, and that the Lord was the source of His every blessing. If the Lord doesn't give us His blessing, we have no other one to whom we can go for the blessings of life which we desperately need.

The last verse, 136, ought to make us think about how the Word of God in us affects our attitude toward the world of unbelievers. This morning I read to you from Romans 9, and I could have read to you from Romans 10, about how Paul felt about his fellow Israelites. He was talking about people who wanted to kill him, who want to make life just as miserable for him as they possibly could. Look at those passages again.

How did it make our psalmist feel? (Read verse 136.) Was it because of the trouble they were causing him? No! It was because the psalmist knew that they were destined for eternal judgment if they did not turn to the Lord. It makes me sick to see two grown men kissing each other. And I know that this is a very grievous sin in the Lord's sight. But we need to remember that the Word has not been opened to them. If the Lord would take mercy upon them and open their blinded minds to the Gospel, He would change them, and they would then live the rest of their lives thanking God, as the psalmist was doing, for His wonderful salvation and the gift of His Word, His precious Word.

Let us turn the message of this stanza upon our own hearts to see if this is the kind of a stanza which we could write, and would love to write. We couldn't do it without the Lord, but with Him all things are possible.