

THE GLORY OF THE WORD OF GOD

Psalm 119:161-168

Intro: It would be very interesting to know who the writer of this Psalm was because of the way he found such widespread blessing in God’s Word. All of us should feel that way the psalmist did about God’s Word, but the truth is that probably no one, or at least very few, have found such satisfaction and blessing in the Word. Our Lord surely was one Who delighted in the Word. Undoubtedly there were others, but most of us would find that we have a ways to go to be able to write a Psalm like this psalmist did. Let us gather what he had to say.

In verse 161 he expressed the controlling and happy influence that the Word had in his life. He expressed this also in verses 166, 167, and 168. In verse 162 it was his joy, as one would rejoice over “great spoil.” In verses 163, 165, 166 and 167 he expressed his love for the Word. It was the subject of his thanksgiving seven times a day – not just occasionally, nor once a day, nor twice, nor three times, *but seven times a day!* In verse 165 it brought him peace, “great peace,” because of his love for it. It brought to him the hope of his salvation in verse 166. And finally he was comforted by the omniscience of the Lord.

Now all of this is said with the idea that the Word can mean all of this to us as well. Basic to all that he said is his love for the Word. So let us think about this before we go into more detail regarding entire stanza, #21.

Obviously he would never have loved the Word if he had not read it, and the more his love for the Word would grow, the more he would read it. For the Lord to reveal His Word in writing, is clear evidence that He wants us to read it. What the Apostle John wrote at the beginning of the book of The Revelation certainly applies to all of the Word of God:

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand (Rev. 1:3).

And we learn what Ezra and Nehemiah and the men who worked with them did in when the people had returned from exile. You find this in Neh. 8:9:

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.

But in addition to reading, we need to meditate in the Word, “day and

night,” as we are told to do in Psa. 1:2 if we are to receive the blessings which the Lord is prepared to give to us. Reading the Word has not been as easy in past generations as it is for us today. But there are many other things that we read, and so we have to give precedence to the reading of the Word. Read it first, and read it last in any day, and get your mind and heart filled with the Word. I don't know how the people of England spoke in Spurgeon's day, but I know that he prayed and he preached in words that were similar to the KJV. How could that happen except for the fact that he read the Word so much that it affected the way he talked. It would be good to hear speech like that today, wouldn't it? And such constant attention to the Word will cause us to memorize much of it without actually trying to do so. Other verses we can purposely seek to memorize like we have done again in our Bible memory groups.

But we can't stop with reading and meditating on the Word if we are really to love it. We must do as the writer of Psalm 119 has said over and over again that he did: we must obey it! It must be the guiding and controlling power in our daily lives.

Read the Bible each day before you read anything else, and read it more than you read anything else. Those who read the Word soon learn to love it, and it becomes the most important activity of the day.

Now let's think about this and apply it to ourselves. I have found that the people in the world who have the most to say against the Bible, are people who have never read it, or if they have read it, it has only been a little here and a little there, but never very much.

Now let us go through the Psalm looking at the results that the psalmist experienced in his life because of his love for the Word.

Verse 161 tells us that the psalmist said, “My heart standeth in awe at thy Word.” And it is significant that he said this in connection with the persecution that “princes” were bringing against him. “Princes” speaks of anyone who has power and authority. The men who told the apostles in the early church not to speak any more in the name of Jesus, would be an illustration of princes. They are people who have the authority to back up the commands that they give. And such persecution is enough to stop a lot of people. But not the Psalmist. It was like he was telling us that he had to ask himself this question: Who or what do I have the greatest fear for, “princes,” or the Word of God. Now in speaking of fearing the Word,

he meant, fearing that he might do anything that would be displeasing to the Lord. We have to ask ourselves this question. Who do we want to obey if it comes to a choice between the two: man, or God. The apostles help us in this when they told the Jewish authorities, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

The psalmist was evidently faced with a crucial decision, but it was easy for him to decide what to do because he feared, he revered God more than he did those with the greatest authority over him. It is only God working through His Word in our hearts that can give us such boldness. That is why we need to stay in the Word.

Now look at what else the Word did for him. We all think that it would be great to find some treasure which we would be able to claim for ourselves. That was one thing that made men want to go to war in Bible times, to claim as spoil the possession of the enemies. Most people are interested in getting as much money as they can. Look at the billions that are spent all over our country by people who want to win in the lottery, or any other form of gambling that they can get. The psalmist found greater and lasting riches in the Word. He wouldn't trade his Bible for all of the riches of the world, and the Word gave him greater joy than finding great spoil.

In verse 163 we see that loving the Word caused to hate and abhor lying. This is the one sin that all of us are more prone to do than any other sin. It is one of the earliest sins that we are guilty of committing. In Psalm 58:3 we read, “The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.” Now we can safely say that if the psalmist learned to hate and abhor lying because of his love for the Word, then you can be sure that he learned to hate every other sin because of the way God was using the Word in his heart.

When we read 164 can we think of anything that we deliberately do seven times a day, even things that we like to do? How many of us pray seven times a day, and by that I mean taking time specifically to thank God for anything. The psalmist, in speaking of the judgments of the Word was referring to the way he had received guidance from the Word. He had never regretted doing the will of God as he found it revealed in the Word. We regret our sins, but never when we have put the Word first in our lives.

One thing that I have been impressed with in visiting Al Houck has been the amazing peace that he has in his heart, and which shows in his life. And he knows exactly what is going on in his body. It is “great peace.” All of this hit Al all of us sudden. He had no time to get ready for it. But he was prepared (as much as anyone can be) by his love for the Word. I have watched Al on Sunday mornings as he has repeated our memory verses in Sunday School without looking at the book.

We never know what a day may bring forth. But if we are faithfully spending time in the Word, one of the benefits we receive is “great peace.” “Nothing shall offend them” means that nothing will make them stumble and fall. Of course we are all going to be shaken if suddenly we find ourselves facing imminent death, but God’s peace will be there for those who love the Word, and have shown in their lives that they do love it.

In verse 166 the psalmist was looking ahead to the hope that he had in his salvation. I think OT saints knew more about glory than we given them credit for knowing. Where did he learn about it? It had to be in the Word. And so in preparation for that day he had faithfully lived according to the commandments of the Lord. In verse 167 he said that he had “kept” the Lord’s “testimonies.” And he had loved them. He had become more and more convinced that God’s Word was truly God’s Word. In verse 168 he added “precepts” to “testimonies.” And in both of these last verses the psalmist used the word, “kept.” This means that he had guarded the Word, considering it a sacred trust from God, and that among the chief ways he guarded it was to obey it.

What a stanza! You could take these eight verses and learn a great deal about what it means to love the Lord, and to walk in fellowship with Him. But it will only profit us if we take it verse by verse and apply each verse to ourselves and the way we live to see what we are doing.

But as a final word of encouragement, notice how verse 168 ends: “All my ways are before Thee.” Keil and Delitzsch say in their commentary on this Psalm that these words are an expression which showed the psalmist’s belief in *the omniscience of God*. They speak of God as “the Omniscient One.” The Lord knew the psalmist’s persecutors. He realized the authority that they had, probably to take the psalmist’s life. And this truth also had been impressed upon the psalmist through the Word. It is one thing to know that God is an all-knowing God, but it is

only by the Word that we can really enter into this truth, and benefit from it personally. The Word brings us into the very presence of the Lord, and as we come to know Him, and love Him, and trust Him, He gives us that “great peace” which so often surpasses all of our understanding.

I trust that our time examining this stanza tonight will send us home with a greater desire and a greater determination that by the grace of God, the Word is going to have a greater place in our daily lives than ever before. Life is so full and so busy these days that we have to make room for the Word, or we will never get to it. So let’s not think about the Word after we get everything else done. If we do, we will never get to the Word. Let us put the Lord and His Word first, and then we will see how He helps us to take care of the many things that are calling for our attention.