

Psalm 119: For The Love Of Scripture!

Psalm 119:137-144

Psalm 119:137

(KJV) TZADDI. Righteous art thou, O LORD, and upright are thy judgments.

(NIV) You are righteous, LORD, and your laws are right.

Tzaddi. In the Jewish tradition, this eighteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet represents *life*. It's actual translated meaning is two-fold: it can mean either *righteous* or *hunting*. To personify these words, imagine a man or woman who is in the practice of guarding their hearts (Proverbs 4:23) from the world (1 John 2:15-17), is intimately connected to Jesus and His Word (John 15:1-17) and bears the righteous fruit of the Spirit:

Galatians 5:22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Now contrast this person with the *hunter*, one who wholeheartedly embraces the world system and all of its wicked attractions (Matthew 4:8-9), and by default worships the Father of Lies, the ringleader of all evil. This person devises wicked imaginations and is swift in letting their feet run to mischief (Proverbs 6:18). The fruit this person produces is obvious:

Galatians 5:19-21

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

One glance at the world today is enough to see that *all* bad fruit is produced by dead lives living independent of God.

With regards to the letter *tzaddi* representing life, the born-again righteous person not only possesses eternal life, but brings to the world abundant life through Jesus:

John 10:10

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Psalm 1:3

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Proverbs 11:30 *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.*

Righteous art thou, O LORD, and upright are thy judgments. Oh, but we are careful to point out that in every moment, we are free to be *righteous* or a *hunter*. And the fruit we produce depends on what our hearts and minds are set upon.

Romans 8:1-11

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

So yes, we are declared righteous through Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:15-17), and yes we believe that His Word is trustworthy and true, but only our intimate *relationship* with Him - through love, trust, and obedience - will bring *life* into this dying world. Hallelujah!

Psalms 119:138

(KJV) Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful.

(NIV) The statutes you have laid down are righteous; they are fully trustworthy.

Unlike the rigid man-made rules and regulations laid out by the religious sect of Biblical times - and every legalistic movement of men throughout history - the Holy Bible stands in glorious contrast in that it is *God-breathed*:

2Timothy 3:16-17

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Because God's Word is inspired by Him, we can trust that it will go forth unhindered and accomplish that which God intended:

Isaiah 55:10-11

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Indeed The Holy Bible is the only book approved by God to bring us to maturity in Christ, and bring full glory to God its Author.

The psalmist in this verse proclaims that, like God Himself, His Word is righteous and faithful. He has learned to taste and see that he can trust it! (Psalm 34:8) Beloved, let this be our experience also!

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: What is your relationship to God's Word these days? Is it an integral part of your daily walk with God? Do you trust it?

*STUDY POINT: What other passages in the Old and New Testament exemplify the trustworthiness of God's Word? Who were the Biblical people in those passages changed by its faithfulness? How might you personally be encouraged by these people with faith in God's Word?

Psalm 119:139

(KJV) My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.

(NIV) My zeal wears me out, for my enemies ignore your words.

Now here is a lesson in contrast. Have you ever had an instantaneous, Holy Ghost connection in the Word with another believer you had never met before? Then, during the next week talked only weather, politics, and sports with a believer you had known for years? What is going on here? The kind of zeal that the psalmist possesses here is simply the byproduct of an obedient, right relationship with God. The Bible is an endlessly exciting book when the Holy Ghost teaches it and reveals it to us! Our zeal for God's Word is only further heightened and highlighted by the disconnected disinterest of our enemies.

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Recall interactions in your own life with different believers. Did you feel a closer connection with some more than others? Why do you think that is?

*STUDY POINT: Identify 3 Scriptures that help to explain why we might experience an instant bond with some Christians, and an awkward disconnect with others.

Psalm 119:140

(KJV) Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.

(NIV) Your promises have been thoroughly tested, and your servant loves them.

You may be asking, what is *very pure* in this corrupted world? Has not virtually everything been touched by sin and deceit since the fall of mankind in the Garden of Eden? (Genesis 3) I have to declare, along with our psalmist here, "No!" God has faithfully preserved in heaven His *very pure* Word throughout all time:

Psalm 119:89 LAMED. For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.

How tragic then that our world turns a blind eye to the very Word that proclaims that it is "A lamp to [our] feet and a light to [our] path." (Psalm 119:105) The turning away of humankind from God and His Word is one half of the Gospel:

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

But I pray for you and I, like the psalmist, that we would stand firm upon the second part of the Gospel - which cost God His One and Only Son - and that God's Word would remain, like Jesus, our First Love.

1Corinthians 15:1-2

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

John 15:7-8

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

So, while it is true that God has preserved His *very pure* Word, we as followers of Jesus must be diligent to guard our hearts in obedience to that same Word.

Psalm 119:141

(KJV) I am small and despised: yet do not I forget thy precepts.

(NIV) Though I am lowly and despised, I do not forget your precepts.

Small. Despised. The King James rendering of Psalm 119:141 perfectly expresses the low state of our psalmist in the eyes of his mockers. Anyone who as a child has been bullied in the schoolyard may relate to feeling small and despised under the taunts and teasing of enemies. I certainly have experienced this. As believers in Jesus, we are enlisted in His army, and can expect an onslaught of verbal darts aimed at our very worth as Christians. Expect it.

2Timothy 3:12 *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*

All the more reason then to be suited up in the whole armour of God (Ephesians 6:10-20) and, in particular, with the shield of faith, to be able to deflect all the flaming darts of the evil one. (Ephesians 6:16)

A word of encouragement as we enter into battle each day: Jesus calls it a blessing that we are in the battle, which He has already won, and that we are called *small* and *despised* for His name's sake:

Luke 6:22

Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

The many deaths of self that we die at the hands of our enemies only serve to stir up in us our hunger and thirst for God's righteousness (Matthew 5:6). To die *for* Him - in small and big ways - is to die *with* Him, that we may experience His victory and resurrection life all the more completely.

Psalm 119:142

(KJV) Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.

(NIV) Your righteousness is everlasting and your law is true.

Statements of fact. And this verse builds upon Psalm 119:140, adding to the attributes of God's Word and its perfect representation of God's righteousness and truth.

Psalm 119:143

*(KJV) Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet thy commandments are my delights.
(NIV) Trouble and distress have come upon me, but your commands give me delight.*

Though storms and trials continue to come upon our psalmist here - as indeed they will in every believer's life - they are of no real concern in light of God's Word which the psalmist calls his "delights." The emphasis is never on the storm and trial, for Jesus promises us that there will always be sufficient trouble and tribulation for us:

John 16:33

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Hallelujah! It does not matter what kind of trouble is coming our way because Jesus and His Word have overcome any and every type of tribulation! So we can rejoice and have peace in Him!

John 14:27

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Psalm 119:144

*(KJV) The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.
(NIV) Your statutes are always righteous; give me understanding that I may live.*

Our heart's desires are important to God. Indeed He knows what our heart's desires are, and when our hearts are in alignment with His heart, He is only too happy to reward us above and beyond what we ask for:

Matthew 6:33

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

1Kings 3:1-15

And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall of Jerusalem round about. Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the LORD, until those days. And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places. And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy,

according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days. And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

Aligning our hearts with God's Word. Cultivating a love for God's Word. Beloved, these are noble and praiseworthy goals, and will ensure that our heart's desires, and the requests we make of God, are perfectly aligned to His will:

Mark 11:22-24

And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

Amen.

~ Reverend Darren McClelland