

Psalm 119: For The Love Of Scripture!

Psalm 119:153-160

Psalm 119:153

(KJV) RESH. Consider mine affliction, and deliver me: for I do not forget thy law.

(NIV) Look on my suffering and deliver me, for I have not forgotten your law.

Resh. We begin this next stanza of eight verses with the twentieth letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The construction of this letter *resh* is simply two lines — one horizontal and one vertical, representing intellect and speech. The absence of a *yud* (Hebrew dot that resembles a small flame and represents God) over this letter indicates the absence of God, and therefore portrays a person who is ungodly in intellect and speech. They have become reprobate in character, essentially giving their God-given gifts over to sin and exceeding evil.

Romans 6:13

Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

See in this verse a clear delineation between righteousness and un-righteousness. Also, the type of instruments we become is determined by what nature we *yield* to. Adding a *yud* (presence of God) to the letter *resh* is to introduce holiness into what was previously corrupt human nature. To add God — and specifically salvation in Jesus — introduces abundant and eternal life into the empty shell of a life dead in transgressions:

Ephesians 2:1-3

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

And so, we can only view the psalmist in Psalm 119:153 as a man who has come to be introduced to God — more likely God introducing Himself — and growing to delight in His Word. Beloved, this is as interesting as it is miraculous: that each of us who have been introduced to Jesus through His Gospel no longer view God through the telescope lens of rhetoric and religion, but through the intimacy of the Holy Ghost Who has gloriously come to reside in our hearts by faith!

Galatians 4:8-9

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable forces? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again?

Consider mine affliction, and deliver me. One of the benefits of becoming a child of God is to have His ear for all eternity. We speak, He listens. So, what is *your* affliction? Is it a stubborn sin pattern that has taken root in your heart? Is it a character flaw that threatens to ruin your relationships? Is it physical pain that keeps you far from the prayer altar? Maybe, in the case of our dear psalmist, it is the pure evil of persecution from accusers and mockers who deny or hate your God, and by your association with Him plot your demise:

Acts 8:1

And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

I do not forget thy law. Let me exhort you, dear believer, here and now. No matter what your affliction may be, or how unbearable it may seem, do not loose your stubborn grip on God's unfailing promises. They will be fulfilled, for your God is faithful!

Hebrews 10:23

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Psalm 119:154

(KJV) Plead my cause, and deliver me: quicken me according to thy word.

(NIV) Defend my cause and redeem me; preserve my life according to your promise.

Trust me, you want God to be on your side:

Psalm 124:1-8 A song of ascents. Of David.

If the LORD had not been on our side - let Israel say - if the LORD had not been on our side when people attacked us, they would have swallowed us alive when their anger flared against us; the flood would have engulfed us, the torrent would have swept over us, the raging waters would have swept us away. Praise be to the LORD, who has not let us be torn by their teeth. We have escaped like a bird from the fowler's snare; the snare has been broken, and we have escaped. Our help is in the name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

And when God is on your side — by glorious default — *His* cause will be *your* cause. *His* Word becomes *your* Way. Divine help is hidden in your heart 24/7 (Psalm 119:11) until you grace the gates of heaven. Believe it!

Psalm 119:155

(KJV) Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes.

(NIV) Salvation is far from the wicked, for they do not seek out your decrees.

SALVA'TION, n. [L. salvo, to save.]

1. The act of saving; preservation from destruction, danger or great calamity.
2. Appropriately in theology, the redemption of man from the bondage of sin and liability to eternal death, and the conferring on him everlasting happiness. This is the great salvation.

Salvation can mean eternal life in God and Jesus. It can also mean divine rescue. But for those who deny or deride God, neither description of salvation applies or is appropriated.

Here we see the psalmist putting words in God's mouth. But note well, these are God's words, and affirmation that the psalmist yearns to hate what God hates, and with matching vehement vengeance. At the same time, as worthy exegetes of the Holy Scriptures, we need to regard the context of this verse within the whole council of God and temper with God's mercy our observations of the wicked:

2Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Like Saul before Paul, like any sinner lost before being found, like you and I before Jesus — mercy triumphed over justice (James 2:13). Today, God is still withholding His justice in favour of His long suffering. Like Apostle Paul, we were under grace, and sinners far from God's salvation are right now under that same grace, and can still be saved.

Our work is to *pray*.

QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Have you recently caught yourself in a vengeful moment towards an unbeliever? How did you turn that moment into prayer for salvation on their behalf? Or did you?

Psalm 119:156

(KJV) Great are thy tender mercies, O LORD: quicken me according to thy judgments.

(NIV) Your compassion, LORD, is great; preserve my life according to your laws.

Beloved, we desire God's blessing and favour — His very Word — over our lives, do we not?

Numbers 6:22-27

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.

The only alternative is the world (1 John 2:15-17) and its deadly, deceitful host:

1Peter 5:8-9

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

I grieve when I see myriad Christians in the throes of worldliness, really not bothered by the Evil One at all, steeped as they are in a spiritual coma, and of little threat to the Father

of Lies. The tragedy is that neither are their hearts attuned to God any longer, and God's blessing and favour have become a distant memory.

Oh, God, preserve our lives in Jesus Your Son, and through Your faithful, unchanging Word. Amen.

Psalm 119:157

(KJV) Many are my persecutors and mine enemies; yet do I not decline from thy testimonies.

(NIV) Many are the foes who persecute me, but I have not turned from your statutes.

The psalmist is surrounded by the wicked. Still he knows that he has the military advantage. He knows because God has assured him through His Word:

2Kings 6:14-17

Then he sent horses and chariots and a strong force there. They went by night and surrounded the city. When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?" the servant asked. "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." And Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, LORD, so that he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Oh, servant of God, never forget that God has equipped you for the spiritual battles ahead. Stay dressed in the full armour of God (Ephesians 6:10-20) and keep the Sword of the Word sharp and ready!

Psalm 119:158

(KJV) I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word.

(NIV) I look on the faithless with loathing, for they do not obey your word.

Once again, the psalmist beholds his enemies and finds their godless ways insufferable. Beloved, it is not wrong to hand the wicked over to God in prayer, knowing that hard, reprobate hearts care not for our holy God and His matchless Word.

Proverbs 6:16-19

These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

Matthew 10:14-15 *And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.*

*STUDY POINT: Find two instances in both the Old Testament and New Testament where God's mercy seems to have been exhausted, and justice was swiftly carried out?

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: How do these Biblical examples of God's severe discipline make you feel about Him?

Psalm 119:159

(KJV) Consider how I love thy precepts: quicken me, O LORD, according to thy lovingkindness.

(NIV) See how I love your precepts; preserve my life, LORD, in accordance with your love.

Take a look Lord at my heart. It is this childlike faith and humility coupled with authentic transparency that defines the righteous man or woman in Christ. Our psalmist invites his Lord to take a look at his heart's desire for Scripture and his confidence and trust in God's love. This verse is so tender and reveals once again the intimacy we can have with our Father God.

Psalm 123:2

Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

Galatians 4:6

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Where is your trust quotient with God your Father? Is there anything in your heart that is preventing your relationship with God from deepening? Ask God to shine His holy searchlight on your heart today (Psalm 139:23-24) and trust Him to help you come closer.

Psalm 119:160

(KJV) Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.

(NIV) All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.

I have asked this question many times before, but could there be any greater investment of our minds, hearts, and time than memorizing, meditating upon, and studying God's eternal Word?

Psalm 119:11 *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

Matthew 24:35 *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*

Amen!

~ Reverend Darren McClelland