

Psalm 119: For The Love Of Scripture!

Psalm 119:41-48

Psalm 119:41

(KJV) VAU. Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, even thy salvation, according to thy word.

(NIV) May your unfailing love come to me, LORD, your salvation, according to your promise;

As we are learning, all-powerful God orchestrated and organized for our visual retention each eight-verse stanza in Psalm 119 with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. A single letter precedes each of the eight-verse stanzas, and begins each of the verses within the stanza. We have arrived here at stanza number six, preceded by the sixth Hebrew letter *vau*, which means “hook” and has the shape of a tent peg that would have been used to hang the curtain of the tabernacle:

Exodus 27:9-10

"Make a courtyard for the tabernacle. The south side shall be a hundred cubits long and is to have curtains of finely twisted linen, with twenty posts and twenty bronze bases and with silver hooks and bands on the posts.

I include this detail because just as the tabernacle was the habitation of God for the Israelites wherever they sojourned, so the scribes regarded the Torah as the habitation of God's Word. They signified this by beginning each column of text with a *vau*, thereby symbolically hooking the text to the parchment.

Perhaps you've never regarded God as a “hook,” but He is a God of connection, so awesome and majestic as to fill heaven and earth:

Acts 7:48-50

Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things?

This sixth Hebrew letter also represents the divine eternal connection *between* heaven and earth:

Matthew 18:18-20

Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

The spiritual connection between heaven and earth is real and tangible. Our actions and deeds by faith in the here and now have eternal effect!

Also, as the sixth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *vau* has numerical significance:

- Humankind was created on the sixth day.
- God worked six days, rested on the seventh, as we as believers observe the Sabbath.
- Even the number of the beast is the “number of a man” 666. (Revelation 13:18)

So the significance of beginning our text with this letter is deep, and would have foreshadowed the theme of these eight verses in the Hebrew/Jewish mindset even before the first verse!

In Verse 41, the psalmist reveals how God’s Word contains the Gospel - the salvation available through Jesus Christ - and the glorious promise of God accessible to every man, woman, and child in the world. In fact, one of the earliest recorded texts that state the Gospel message is found in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4:

1Corinthians 15:1-4

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. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

Psalm 119:42

(KJV) So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word. (NIV) then I can answer anyone who taunts me, for I trust in your word.

The implication here is that the psalmist has confidence and trust in God’s Word, the same Word that supernaturally brings salvation to lost souls when believed upon and received by faith (Romans 10:13). How much more then does the psalmist - and by extension you and I - stand ready to proclaim God’s Word in the presence of enemies!

Jesus is our perfect example of wielding God’s Word as a mighty sword (Ephesians 6:17), but in the presence of Satan and his temptations:

Matthew 4:1-11

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

There will be times in our walk with God when He will present us before our enemies, or those who reject Jesus His Son, and He will equip us to be powerful sword-wielding soldiers for His witness and glory! Count on it! Count on *Him!*

Luke 12:11-12

And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

Psalm 119:43

(KJV) And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments.

(NIV) Never take your word of truth from my mouth, for I have put my hope in your laws.

I love Matthew Henry's paraphrase of this verse:

He means, "Lord, let the word of truth be always in my mouth; let me have the wisdom and courage which are necessary to enable me both to use my knowledge for the instruction of others, and, like the good householder, to bring out of my treasury *things new and old*, and to make profession of my faith whenever I am called to it."

Oh God, let us be faithful stewards of Your Word by delighting in it, remembering it, meditating upon it, studying it, understanding it, and obeying it - all for our fruitfulness, and for Your glory. Amen.

Psalm 119:44

(KJV) So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever.

(NIV) I will always obey your law, for ever and ever.

The psalmist here is not making a vow to God to be forever sinless and perfect; indeed, Jesus has fulfilled this perfect righteousness for us:

Matthew 3:13-17

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

However, the psalmist here is expressing his desire to love God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). When our love for God is complete, obedience naturally follows. Making promises and vows to God apart from our love relationship with Him is carnal and foolish:

Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong. Do not be quick with your mouth, do

not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few. A dream comes when there are many cares, and many words mark the speech of a fool. When you make a vow to God, do not delay to fulfill it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. It is better not to make a vow than to make one and not fulfill it. Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the temple messenger, "My vow was a mistake." Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands? Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore fear God.

Psalm 119:45

(KJV) And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.

(NIV) I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out your precepts.

To the unbeliever, God's Word seems confining and restrictive - usually the Ten Commandments are cited as an example of slavish rules that reflect a religious God. But God is not religious, nor does He lord over us with dogmatic assertions! The unbeliever, still dead in their transgressions, living apart from faith in God, cannot and will not love and obey the God apart from faith in Him and relationship with Him:

Hebrews 11:6

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

But the truth of God's Word activated by faith actually sets us free to love and serve God forever in moment-by-moment, step-by-step fellowship. How awesome!

Psalm 119:46

(KJV) I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.

(NIV) I will speak of your statutes before kings and will not be put to shame,

Alluding to Psalm 119:42, our psalmist here makes a declaration based on his confidence in God's Word:

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.

When standing in the presence of our enemies, the Holy Ghost wields the sword of the spirit - God's Word - on our behalf:

Luke 12:11-12

And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

Psalm 119:47

(KJV) And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.

(NIV) for I delight in your commands because I love them.

And here we have what sounds like the theme of Psalm 119 - *for the love of Scripture!* We invest the *most* time, thought, and action in the things we love the *most* - despite what we may say. The following verses describe a fully devoted life of study in and meditation upon God's Word:

Psalm 1:1-3

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 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.

Joshua 1:8

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

John 15:7

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Proverbs 6:20-23

My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:

And lest you think God deserves anything less than all of your devotion:

Luke 10:27

And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

All means *all*.

But know this beloved, it will be a battle between flesh and spirit to continue to delight in God's Word:

Galatians 5:16-17

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

Psalm 119:4-5

Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!

However, Apostle Paul teaches us in the New Testament that we are able to work out (Greek work *katergazomai* - accomplish fully) all that God desires for us, because He is working it out in us and for us, all to *His* delight!

Philippians 2:12-13

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Psalm 119:48

(KJV) My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.

(NIV) I reach out for your commands, which I love, that I may meditate on your decrees.

Let this last verse this week be our prayer, be our heart's desire - *God help us to reach up and reach out for Your Word because we love it, because we need it. Then we will meditate upon it. Amen.*

- Reverend Darren McClelland