

## 11-Waiting On A Word During Suffering-119 81-88.docx

Psalm 119:81-88

### To know Him and Make Him Known

We have arrived at the eleventh section of the 22 letter alphabetic Psalm. Here the psalm reveals the dark and dreary midnight of a distraught soul. The psalmist is in anguish. His soul faints (v. 81), his eyes fail as he looks for comfort (v. 82), he is persecuted (v. 84), the proud have set their traps for him (v. 85), he is attacked abusively (v. 86), and he almost dies (v. 87). Stars though shine out in the night and the last verse gives promise of the dawn. Even in the midst of darkness and despair, he continues to seek God's Word and prays for revival, "so that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth" (v. 88). [Williams, Donald. The Preacher's Commentary Series, Vol. 14: Psalms 73-150. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1989, S. 362.]

The thrust of the Psalm will become more cheerful after this stanza; but let these verses make us aware that even the most eminent servants of God are persecuted by the ungodly. It is no strange thing when the godly encounter persecution by those who refuse to yield to God and His Word. May the understanding that God has brought His godly servants before us through dreaded persecutions minister comfort and encouragement to us in our own tribulations (CIM) (John 16:33).

#### 1) WAITING ON A WORD, 81-83.

- a) Kaph.
- b) Verse 81 opens with the theme of suffering and the longing for divine intervention.
- c) "My soul languishes for Your salvation; I wait [hope] for Your word."
- d) The hour is urgent.
- e) The crisis is clear.
- f) The need is great.
- g) The psalmist cries out that his soul is ready to fail while waiting for God's Word to be fulfilled.
- h) The thing that causes him not to give up is his hope in God's Word.
- i) When God seems absent and the darkness stalks us, we still have the light of His promises to us.
- j) The salvation and comfort of God's people are secured to us by the word or promise which will certainly be fulfilled in its season.
- k) The psalmist's anguish is well represented in verse 82. "My eyes fail with longing for Your word, While I say, "When will You comfort me?"
- l) He longs for help from heaven.
- m) In his pain, he continually searches the Word of God. His eyes even now fail or grow dim from his study or his weeping.
- n) This is no academic exercise.
- o) David knew where he anchored his life-ship.
- p) Hope without a promise is like an anchor without a secure hold.
- q) David's hope is fixed upon the divine Word.
- r) Where is your hope placed?
- s) Blessed are the eyes that are strained in searching after God.
- t) The eyes of the Lord will see to it that such eyes do not actually fail.

- u) David begs God in verse 83 to make haste to come to him because of his life-sapping affliction. "Though I have become like a wineskin in the smoke, I do not forget Your statutes."
- v) The psalmist using a simile describes him self as a "wineskin in smoke."
- w) This means that he was being weakened or shriveled up like a wineskin becomes in a smoky room or in the fire.
- x) He is cracked and dry.
- y) Even good men, when they are down and discouraged, sometimes think themselves more slighted than they really are.
- z) Nevertheless, he stands upon God's Word in his distress. "Yet I do not forget Your statutes."
- aa) His great affliction had not driven him from the Word but thrust him upon the Word.
- bb) In our pain God's promises often become more real.
- cc) No matter how dark the hour, the future is our friend, because Jesus is our Lord.
- dd) It's always too soon to quit on the Lord.

## 2) DIRE NEED FOR A WORD, 84-86.

- a) David's debilitating condition causes him to wonder if he will make it.
- b) He knows he won't if his persecution lasts much longer, so he asked how long it would be until he is vindicated.
- c) In verse 84 David prays that God would make haste to execute judgment on those that persecuted him. "How many are the days of Your servant? When will You execute judgment on those who persecute me?"
- d) With the shortness of his life before him, the psalmist now asks, "How many are the days of Your servant?" [God's servant is one who submitted himself to God.]
- e) The implied answer is, "Not many."
- f) He feels his time is running out.
- g) The sands of the hourglass near exhaustion due to the pain of relentless attacks.
- h) So he prays, "When will You execute judgment on those who persecute me?"
- i) He prays not for power to avenge himself for he refused fall into hate and malice.
- j) He asks that God Himself would take action to avenge and would repay (Rom. 12:19) what man has done to him.
- k) There is a day coming, a great and terrible day, when God will execute judgment on all the proud persecutors of His people (Jude 14).
- l) Verse 85 declares that the proud are those who live in disagreement to the law of God. "The arrogant have dug pits for me, Men who are not in accord with Your law."
- m) His enemies are like hunters who have dug their pits for him, to catch him like prey.
- n) They were deliberate in their designs against him and what they did was with malice intent.
- o) Their attacks are not the execution of divine justice for their illegal actions were not according to God's law.
- p) These presumptuous sinner did not care that they were breaking divine commands and prohibitions.
- q) The promise attached to God's commandments are certain verse 86 declares. "All Your commandments are faithful; They have persecuted me with a lie; help me!"
- r) God's Word is "faithful" or trustworthy and true.

- s) Since it is faithful it demand our faithfulness also so that we might become faithful.
- t) Refusing to adhere to God's standard the arrogant use a lie, possible public accusations or slanders to heap more wood on his fiery trial.
- u) His prayer is simple, "Help me!"
- v) Help me in my troubles that I may bear them patiently as I should.
- w) Help me still hold fast my integrity and, in due time, help me out of my troubles.
- x) Note that the psalmist does not take matters into his own hands.
- y) He presents his case to God and expects His intervention.
- z) Like Jesus on the cross, he trusts Him in his hour of agony.

### 3) IMPART A REVIVING WORD, 87-88.

- a) Now the psalmist asserts that though his enemies almost consumed him, he had not forsaken God's Law.
- b) Verse 87 shows us that the situation is critical. It is a matter of life or death. "They almost destroyed me on earth, But as for me, I did not forsake Your precepts."
- c) They carried on their designs against him so far that they had almost remove him from the earth.
- d) They believe their rights in the land supercede his rights.
- e) But the bush in which God is, though it burns, will not be burnt up.
- f) Christ is worth every thing, and therefore worth suffering for.
- g) Even under such severe stress he remained true to God's Word; he did not forsake God's precepts.
- h) Their aimed was to frighten him from the ways of God, but they did not prevail.
- i) David would sooner forsake all that was dear to him in this world than forsake the Word of God.
- j) He would sooner lose his life than forsake the duty of doing the will of God.
- k) He knows his need for fresh grace so that he might not succumb so in verse 88 he asks for it. "Revive me according to Your lovingkindness, so that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth."
- l) Restore life to me (v. 25)! We cannot proceed, nor persevere, in the everlasting way, unless God revives us by renewing the life He put into us.
- m) We are therefore here taught to depend upon the grace, the lovingkindness ['covenant-love'] of God for strength to do every good work.
- n) The surest indication of God's good-will toward us is His good work in us.
- o) In the midst of the pain David appeals to the lovingkindness, the covenant promise of Yahweh.
- p) God will come through for him because as their King He has bound Himself to His people Israel.
- q) As He revives him and restores him, he promises to "obey the testimony of Your mouth."
- r) Like Bunyan's Pilgrim, he will be valiant for God's Word in this world.

### In CLOSING

Is the enemy beating you down? Is he spreading lies about you? God's Word is dependable and can be trusted (vv. 128, 142, 151, 160). Do you feel like your defeat is very near? Rest on His promises and rely on His love. When the Father allows His children to go into the furnace of affliction, He keeps His eye on the clock and His hand on the thermostat. He knows how long and how much. To walk by faith will bring unrest and weakness, but to meditate on the Word

will bring peace and power. We like the psalmist will find again and again new life as our Lord revives us in His lovingkindness. [Wiersbe, Warren. The Bible Exposition Commentary. Job-Song of Solomon. David Cook. 2004. Colorado Springs, CO. p. 322]. Remember, "your Father in heaven loves you too much to harm you, and He is too wise to make a mistake" (Robert T. Ketcham).

Christians of every age have found comfort in the Scriptures when under persecution. A missionary to Korea, Harold Vokel, recounting his work among prisoners of war during the conflict there. He saw thousands of these young men come to Christ. As they were discipled in the internment camps, one book of the Bible drew them without fail. It was the Book of Revelation, which some memorized in its entirety. Why so? This book is for the suffering church. In the midst of war and loss, its pages gave them comfort and hope. The final victory belonged to the Lamb who became a Lion. As these suffering prisoners waited for God's salvation, they continued to hope in His Word (v. 81). [Williams, S. 362]