

16-God Uphold Your Word.docx

Psalms 119:121-128

To know Him and Make Him Known

Deliverance is a major need in the Christian life and is the theme of this section [Ayin, the 16th Hebrew letter]. The bases for deliverance is one's integrity before God. Because he has kept the divine Word, the writer commends himself to the protection and deliverance of the Lord (CIT).

Opressors (vv. 121, 122) and the proud (v. 122) regard God's Word as empty or void (v. 126). Contrary to their opposition and denial, however, the Word of God stands as true. It is for this reason that God must intervene against them, showing Himself to be the Living God. So the psalmist asked God to deliverance him from arrogant oppressors and to deal with him in justice and love (vv. 121-124). He sought to motivate God to respond to his loyalty as God's servant (vv. 125-126; vv. 122, 124).

1) HIS DIRE CONCERN, 121-124.

- a) Verse 121 opens with the psalmist's **confession** of integrity. "I have done justice and righteousness; Do not leave me to my oppressors."
- b) In affirming his inner righteousness and just actions he lays his integrity before the Lord.
- c) He has **obeyed** the Word of God and been faithful to the covenant.
- d) Therefore, he can with a clear conscience boldly ask, "Do not leave me to my oppressors."
- e) Oppressors appear for the first time in the Psalm here.
- f) The word describes the **abuse** of power and authority, the taking advantage of others by deceit, coercion, or violence.
- g) Since man is unjustly oppressing him, he pleads with God for just action or deliverance.
- h) The servant then asked God to **protect** him from arrogant oppressors in verse 122. "Be surety for Your servant for good; Do not let the arrogant oppress me."
- i) He describes himself as God's "servant," which means that God is his King or Lord and that he is submitted to Him.
- j) The writer asks God to be his guarantee or assurance for him against the oppressing arrogant (vv. 51, 69, 78, 85).
- k) In asking Him to be "surety" [pledge to pay] for him "for good," [for safely, deliverance; Duet. 6:24, 10:13, 30:9] he uses a legal term that means that he wants God to take responsibility for his debt.
- l) In other words, he asks God to **stand** up for him and to **stand** in on his behalf and mediate the concern.
- m) The dire necessity is seen in the repetition of the previous verse's petition: "Do not let the proud oppress me."
- n) This verse is the only one in Psalm 119 that does not have either a direct or indirect (vv. 75, 90, 121, 132) reference to God's Word.
- o) Jesus became surety or a guarantee for those who trust in Him (Heb. 7:22).
- p) By His death on the cross, Jesus has paid the debt for us.
- q) Now He lives as our mediator to make intercession, to stand in the gap for us in all our concerns (Heb. 7:25) so that He might bring about our eternal good (Rom. 8:28).

- r) The desperation and determination of the psalmist is expressed again in verse 123 as he relates the longing with which he **hopes** for God deliverance. "My eyes fail with longing for Your salvation and for Your righteous Word."
- s) He presents himself as continually devoted to Scripture, reading until his eyesight grows dim (v. 82).
- t) Don't you love the expression, "the Word of Thy righteousness"?
- u) The righteous Word is the **promise** of a righteous God, who cannot lie.
- v) God's "righteous Word" will not merely give him comfort; it will come against his oppressors.
- w) For the promise which proceeds from God's righteousness or integrity cannot remain unfulfilled.
- x) In verse 124 he urgently **calls** for the life of blessing that comes to those with a deeper knowledge of God's Word. "Deal with Your servant according to Your loving-kindness and teach me Your statutes."
- y) He asks that the Lord give him loving-kindness ("covenant-love") or mercy, identifying himself as His covenant "servant."
- z) "And teach me Your statutes."
- aa) It is out of that covenant bond so clearly revealed in Scripture that the psalmist expects God to act in his behalf.
- bb) He then **pleads** with God to be his teacher.

2) HIS DESPERATE CRY, 125-126.

- a) Verse 125 is a petition for **understanding** of God's Word because he is a servant of God. "I am Your servant; give me understanding, that I may know Your testimonies."
- b) The **prayer** is for discernment.
- c) It is not enough to know the **content** of God's Word; we must also ask Him to illumine it for us.
- d) Those who are taught the Word can receive the discernment they need to handle the concerns of life.
- e) Understanding and faith come alive when we apply Scripture to our daily tasks and concerns.
- f) We need discernment so we can **understand** life and how to apply Scripture.
- g) The Bible is like medicine, it only goes to work if it is applied to the need or affected area.
- h) As you read the Bible be alert for lessons, commands or examples that you can put into practice if you want to become a person of integrity.
- i) In our world of shifting standards, can **integrity** be acquired by those who don't have it?
- j) The answer is found in "our unchanging standard-God's Word, the Bible."
- k) David the psalmist did not head a: multinational corporation.
- l) But he did rule over a kingdom, and he was serious about doing what was right.
- m) He recognized how easy it is to slide down the slippery path of unethical behavior simply because it seems advantageous.
- n) So David asked God, "Teach me Your statutes" (Ps.119:124). "Give me understanding," he said; "that I may know Your testimonies" (v. 125).
- o) David hated "every false way," and based his life on the principle that "all Your precepts concerning all things I consider to be right" (v.128).
- p) No one is **born** with godly character.

- q) But by **studying** God's Word and **listening** to His Holy Spirit, we can learn to hate falsehood and love integrity.
- r) The previous verses, with their confessions of righteousness and reminders of the covenant, all lead up to the psalmist's request given in verse 126. "It is time for the Lord to act, for they have broken Your law."
- s) They refers to the oppressors and the proud (vv. 121–22).
- t) These evildoers have **rejected** God's law; they pronounce it as empty.
- u) The call is for Yahweh to vindicate His person and His Word by bringing judgment upon them.
- v) Notice that he calls on God to act [for the God of Revelation must act according to what He has revealed].
- w) God acts according to His Word and the prayers of His people.
- x) The call to act either in defense of His servant or in judgment upon the law breakers, or most likely, both.
- y) When God acts, He will act in justice.
- z) The cry though is for God to act now, in this concern or situation.
- aa) Thus the psalmist sought to motivate God to respond by explaining his loyalty as God's servant (vv. 125-126; vv. 122, 124).
- bb) Each of us wants God to act immediately and set things right.
- cc) God's timing though is not always our timing.
- dd) God's **delays** are not God's **denials**.
- ee) In His time the truth will be revealed and sin will be judged.

3) HIS DISCERNING CLAIM, 127-128.

- a) Having asked God to act according to His **Word**, the psalmist contrasts himself with his oppressors by stating in verse 127 how much he loves God's Word. "Therefore I love Your commandments above gold, yes, above fine gold."
- b) Though he saw the ungodly reject the Scripture, he chose to love it.
- c) God's commandments were more precious to him than "**gold**," or even "fine gold," that which has been refined in the fire.
- d) He loved God's Word, valuing them more than gold (vv. 14, 57, 72, 111).
- e) **ILL-THE GIDEONS**, a worldwide network of people who distribute Bibles, had been operating in the former Soviet Union less than a year. It did take them long to find opportunities to pass out copies of the Scriptures in Russian. Wherever they went, they were welcomed by people who were hungry for the Word of God. In one town they were given permission to pass out New Testaments at an elementary school. The police chief accompanied them, so when they were driven past the assigned school they wondered if they were being taken in for questioning! After driving 6 or 7 kilometers, they pulled up in front of a different school and were told to handout the Bibles. They distributed copies to every student and staff member. Later, the leader of their group asked the chief of police, "Why did we switch schools?" He calmly replied, "Because my two children attend school here. I wanted to make sure they have Bibles."
- f) God's Word is **precious** and valuable (Psalm 19:10).
- g) This Russian official used his power to get copies of the Scriptures for his children - and maybe so he could read it too.
- h) How precious is God's Word to you?

- i) Compared to God's Word, the world's riches are fool's gold.
 - i) More precious than gold is God's Word to me,
 - ii) Much better than pearls from deep in the sea;
 - iii) For in the Lord's words I take great delight,
 - iv) And it is my joy each day and each night.
- j) The psalmist inspired understanding in verse 128 is that all of God's precepts are right. "Therefore I esteem right all Your precepts concerning everything, I hate every false way."
- k) Precepts or commandments of course mean the **Word**.
 - l) The literal thought is "all precepts of all."
 - m) God's precepts will always lead us to go **straight** or right.
 - n) The "false way" is the way of the proud, who in their rebellion and self-sufficiency regard God's law as void (vv. 126, 101, 104).
 - o) If we love the **Word**, we will hate the wrong paths of sin and stay away from them (Prov. 1:13).
 - p) The Bible is more than just a record of long-ago events and ancient wisdom.
 - q) It is His message of **truth** and grace to us.
 - r) Let's not neglect it.
 - s) Let's **read** it, **believe** it, and **obey** it.

IN CLOSING

The God who speaks in and through His Word is also the God who acts. As the truth of His Word is maligned, He will intervene [in His time and in His way]. As the psalmist says, "It is time for You to act, O Lord, for they have regarded Your law as empty" (v. 126).

Isn't there something in us that cries out as we see the blatant materialism of our world, filled with oppression and injustice toward the poor and toward the persecuted? Do we not wish for divine power to be released as we see compromised Christians and an impotent church living in denial of spiritual power? If so, this prayer for deliverance is for us. [Williams, Donald. The Preacher's Commentary Series, Vol. 14: Psalms 73-150. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1989, S. 372.]