

To know Him and Make Him Known

The psalmist called on the Lord to deliver him because he obeyed, hoped in, and meditated on His Word. In this section [Qoph the 19th letter in the Hebrew alphabet] the psalmist is clearly troubled. He stresses that he cries out to God three times (vv. 145–47). He is in need of help. Those who follow wickedness draw near (v. 150) but God and His Word are nearer still (v. 151). Thus his cry is heard. As he calls on God to save him, he also promises that he will keep or obey His Word. As Jesus says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). [Williams, Donald. The Preacher's Commentary Series, Vol. 14: Psalms 73-150. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1989, S. 377.]

We can hear the psalmist's heartfelt prayer within these eight verses. From his cry, call and confession we can receive some instructions and incentives to persist in prayer.

[Spurgeon broke these verse down into: How he prayed (Psalms 119:145). What he prayed for (v. 146). When he prayed (v. 147). How long he prayed (v. 148). What he pleaded (v. 149). What happened (v. 150). How he was rescued (v. 151). What was his witness as to the whole matter (v. 152). [Spurgeon, Charles. The Treasury of David. Vol. 3. McLean, VA: MacDonald Publishing. p. 401.]

1) HIS CRY, 145-148

- a) Strong emotion comes through in the opening of this stanza.
- b) In verse 145 we hear the **passion** of his prayers. "I cried with all my heart; answer me, O Lord! I will observe Your statutes."
- c) This **cry** is from the heart.
- d) Prayer is acceptable only if it is by the heart.
- e) If it is with the lips only then all is lost.
- f) Heart cries are the essence of fervent prayer.
- g) He has cried and was still crying with all his heart.
- h) All the powers of his soul were engaged and exerted to the utmost in his prayers.
- i) The word **hear** can also be rendered "**answer**."
- j) Don't let my words die in the air but respond to them O Lord.
- k) The one praying then promises to obey God's Word.
- l) He could not expect the Lord to hear him if he did not hear the Lord.
- m) He could not expect the Lord to hear him and act if he did not hear the Lord and act.
- n) In verse 146 the **cry** is repeated. "I cried to You; save me and I shall keep Your testimonies."
- o) He cries out to God to be saved.
- p) He needed saving, and none but the Lord could save him.
- q) "Save me" from the **dangers** which surround me, from the enemies that pursue me, from the temptations which beset me, from the sins which accuse me.
- r) The answer that he wants from God's divine intervention is so that he may keep God's "testimonies."

- s) His promise that he will obey God is emphatic by the form of the verb and the parallelism to the previous verse.
- t) He is fully committed to obeying God's Word.
- u) The intensity of the psalmist's cry is revealed by his early communion with God in verse 147. "I rise before dawn and cry for help; I wait for Your words."
- v) He rises in the morning twilight to cry out in prayer.
- w) The help that he needs is divine deliverance.
- x) The basis of his prayer is God's revelation: "I hope in Your words."
- y) His hope is based upon Yahweh's Word, the covenant commitment that He has made to save His people.
- z) Because God is true, and has never turn His back on His unconditional promises, the one who is diligent in prayer will find hope in His words.
- aa) Just as the early bird gets the worm, so the early prayer will be refreshed with hope.
- bb) Verse 148 declares that when he is awake at night he meditates on the Word. "My eyes anticipate the night watches, that I may meditate on Your Word."
- cc) If the psalmist is awake during the night he guards it as if he is a night watchman [the "night watches" were divided into several time periods; Judg. 7:19].
- dd) He redeemed the time by "meditating on" God's "Word" so that he would not be caught of guard by the enemy of his soul.
- ee) When God awakens us in the night we too would do well to keep vigil by mediating on the Word.

2) HIS CALL, 149-151

- a) The psalmist asks God to answer his call in verse 149. "Hear my voice according to Your lovingkindness; Revive me, O Lord, according to Your ordinances."
- b) During his midnight devotions he calls upon Israel's covenant guarding God to renew his spirit within him as He has promised.
- c) Loving-kindness calls to mind God's "covenant-love."
- d) As he encounters promises in the Word he claims them and asks God to apply them because he is a Covenant keeping God.
- e) His plea is to be revived, to be stirred up to that which is good.
- f) He wants to be made vigorous after God and joyful in His pursuit.
- g) The reason for his urgency appears in verse 150. "Those who follow after wickedness draw near; They are far from Your law."
- h) His enemies, though near him, were far removed from God's Law.
- i) Those that stay away from God's Word, are far from God.
- j) They therefore are easily manipulated into wickedness and into attacking those being made righteous by God's word and work.
- k) At the same time the enemy is closing in the psalmist realizes that God is near in verse 151. "You are near, O Lord, and all Your commandments are truth."
- l) Though the wicked may be near to harm, God is nearer still to protect and help.
- m) It is God's nearness that enables us to overcome the nearness of those who disobey His Word.
- n) While the psalmist counts on God's presence, he also counts on the authority of His law. Thus he adds: "And all Your commandments are truth."
- o) All too often the church has forfeited one or the other, either truth or the Spirit.

- p) Either we have welcomed a Bible that is true but **feared** the vital Presence of God in our midst, or we have **gone** after an experience of God and made God's truth subjective.
- q) As the Reformers taught, the two must be bound together, and this is exactly what the psalmist does here.

3) **HIS CONFESSION, 152.**

- a) This section concludes in verse 152 with a confession that God is **forever** faithful to His **promises**. "Of old I have known from Your testimonies that You have founded them forever."
- b) God's own precepts declare themselves to be everlasting.
- c) God's words have not only been found **faithful** for a time, they are forever true.
- d) God has "founded" His testimonies that is, He has laid them as a foundation, both settled and established them for all the ages to come.
- e) They therefore have been verified by person after person, generation after generation.
- f) God's words are trustworthy and **reliable, always, and forever.**

IN CLOSING,

The Psalmist describes the times and the depths of his devotions, and pleads with God for deliverance from his troubles. He who has been with God in the closet will find God with him in the furnace. If we have cried from our heart we shall be answered. Though delayed answers may drive us to continuous prayer, we need not fear the ultimate result, for God's prom