

22-Gods Final Cry and Confession.docx

Psalms 119:169-176

To know Him and Make Him Known

The Psalmist has now come to his last stanza. Letter by letter he has sung and sobbed his way through the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Again and again tears have become rainbows as he turn his eyes toward God's Word. The Word has established him, strengthen him and transformed him, but he is still in need of more of God, more of God's enabling and more of God's Word.

In this section [Taw, Tav, the 22th letter in the Hebrew alphabet] the psalmist closes the psalm by emphasizing his commitment to God's Word and his need for God's enabling to live it out. The final section, in a sense, sums up the whole psalm. It is a meditation upon the Word of God, and it comes from one who knows what it is like to go astray and be brought back home again. The final verse (v. 176) expresses that even the most devoted people need God to help them remain devoted to Him.

The psalmist called on God to hear his prayer and deliver him (vv. 169–170). He praised God for His Word (vv. 171–172). Then he pleas with God to enable him to live since he delighted in His Word (vv. 173–175). The psalmist concluded this lengthy but rich psalm by confessing that he had gone astray like a lost sheep and by asking God to rescue him by His Word (v. 176).

[The first four verses focus on the psalmist's voicing prayers and praises centered on the Word. The last four verses are the voice of testimony arising from the will, the emotions, the life itself and the mind/memory concentrated on the Word.]

1) LORD, HEAR ME—vs. 169-172.

- a) Verse 169 expresses the psalmist's longing **cry** for understanding. "Let my cry come before You, O Lord; Give me understanding according to Your Word!"
- b) "Let my cry come before you" is a plea to let his **prayers** come into the very Presence of God.
- c) As the Psalmist approaches the end of the psalm, his petitions gather force and fervency.
- d) He desires to break into the inner circle of divine fellowship, and to come even to the feet of the great God whose help he is imploring.
- e) For what does he pray?
- f) The psalmist views his **greatest** need as an "understanding according to" the Word.
- g) He knows that spiritual understanding particularly of the Word is man's great needs so he makes it a matter of fervent prayer.
- h) To give an understanding of the Word of God is the special work of the Spirit of God.
- i) This illumination is God's alone to give.
- j) How often have we comprehended the historical and even theological substance of a text in the Bible but missed the spiritual point, the real understanding?
- k) This comprehension comes from God's Spirit as He ministers to us.
- l) Understanding was the first petition in the psalmist's prayer.
- m) His second petition in verse 170 is for the **deliverance** that understanding can bring. "Let my supplication come before You; Deliver me according to Your Word."
- n) Both petitions in verses 169 & 170 are linked by "before" God.

- o) Again he asks that his "supplication" or petition come before Almighty God.
 - p) It did him no good to pray for understanding if God would not hear his prayer.
 - q) Then the psalmist prays, "**deliver** me."
 - r) "Deliver means to "rescue," like taking **prey** out of an animal's mouth.
 - s) In the larger context of the psalm we know that the author faces many enemies, the proud, the oppressors, who would do him in.
 - t) It is good to note that his prayer for deliverance did not precede his prayer for understanding.
 - u) Understanding of God may not always secure deliverance but it facilitates our gratitude for it.
 - v) The psalmist again implies that God's Word includes a commitment to rescue him.
 - w) So the psalmist pleads for deliverance based God's Word to him [for his well-being].
 - x) The cry for the Lord to act according to His Word by working both inwardly (understanding, 'discernment') in verse 169 and outwardly (deliver) in verse 170.
 - y) From his supplications the psalmist passes on to a note of praise.
 - z) Verses 171–172, which are linked by references to lips and tongue, are both praises for responsiveness for the Word taught and for recognition of what it is.
 - aa) In verse 171 the psalmist portrays that his cries have been fulfilled in the **past** and he wants to be enabled to **praise** God for teaching him His Word. "Let my lips utter praise, For You teach me Your statutes.
 - bb) As God intervenes and instructs him by His actions, he promises, "My lips shall pour forth praise."
 - cc) To pour forth is to gush or flow (Ps. 19:2; 78:2).
 - dd) It denotes an eager, abundant and unceasing praise.
 - ee) The basis for this praise is, "For You teach me Your statutes."
 - ff) We can no more praise the Lord God suitably than we can pray to Him, unless the Spirit of God is our teacher.
 - gg) Such instruction results in witness in verse 172. "Let my tongue sing of Your Word, For all Your commandments are righteousness."
 - hh) He prays that his tongue could **speak** or **sing** of God's Word.
 - ii) He is asking for an occasion to witness as well as the words to witness.
 - jj) The motive and content of that witness concerns the righteous Word of God.
 - kk) If we are to have the Word of God on our tongue, it must first be in our heart. Jesus said in **Matthew 12:34** that it is "out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks."
 - ll) That is the reason we must **hide** God's Word in our heart (119:11).
- 2) LORD, HELP ME—vs. 173-175.**
- a) The psalmist resumes his request for divine action, basing the requests on his responsive loyalty to God's Word (v. 173) and his delight in them (v. 174).
 - b) Verse 173 is a call for **divine** intervention. "Let Your hand be ready to help me, For I have chosen Your precepts."
 - c) God's hand represents His **power** (see Ex. 15:6).
 - d) Knowing God's Word or precepts he knows that God is a God of **action**.
 - e) The reason given or the basis for the expectation of help is because he has chosen to study and follow God's precepts.
 - f) The psalmist depicts a reciprocal loyalty between himself and God.

- g) He implies that his loyalty to God and His directions should influence God's loyalty to him.
- h) God-honoring His Word is also a sign of faithfulness to His covenant.
- i) The psalmist combines several elements in unexpected ways as he closes the psalm.
- j) The prayer in verse 174 **sums** up the petitions of the whole Psalm. "I long for Your salvation, O Lord, and Your law is my delight."
- k) Save me or continue to sanctify and I will have reason for my praise of You (119:40, 81, 131).
- l) This deliverance could include from his enemies (v. 170).
- m) As God intervenes in his life he can continue to "delight (intensive plural, vv. 24, 77, 92) in God's law.
- n) It was the **delight** of the psalmist to meditate in the law of God because he had received God's salvation.
- o) But the psalmist still longed for this salvation or sanctification.
- p) This longing came from the deep pleasure he has found in God's Word.
- q) Our Christian faith flourishes only if the Word is our delight.
- r) The psalmist **delighted** in the Word of God; and spontaneously, joyously, and purposefully absorbed himself in God's Holy Word.
- s) Verse 175 focuses on personal **needs** which is the sense of ebbing vitality. "Let my soul live that it may praise You, And let Your ordinances help me."
- t) It is for the welfare of his soul that is his basic and final concern.
- u) His soul had been made alive by God's Spirit, and it is the redeemed soul's response to praise the living Lord.
- v) He realizes that the response of authentic praise gives spiritual life.
- w) He wants to truly live, not merely exist.
- x) Notice that he asks for God's Word to help him rather than God Himself. "Let your ordinances help me."
- y) The psalmist portrays his assistance as coming from God's directions rather than God Himself."
- z) This help and guidance as he **walks** through this life comes from God's ordinances.

3) LORD, HUNT ME—vs. 176.

- a) The last verse [176] of this great psalm is the psalmist's **personal** confession of his tendency to stray and his prayer for restoration. "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Your servant, For I do not forget Your commandments."
- b) The word "astray" [ta'ah] can also mean "to wander" or "to err"[see v. 121].
- c) Although sheep were valuable, they were also notoriously wayward and would wander off without a shepherd to guide them.
- d) Lost sheep is a frequent **figure** in the Scriptures (Isa 53:6; Jer 50:6; Mt 10:6; 15:24).
- e) Lost sheep cannot find their own way back to the shepherd.
- f) He knows he needs to be sought out.
- g) Thus the psalmist's final prayer is, seek thy servant He knows that straying souls experience misery.
- h) So as he confesses, "I have gone astray," he pleads with God to seek or hunt for him.
- i) He needs **God** to find him.
- j) No man seeks God in and of himself (Rom 3:10-23).
- k) The psalmist knew that his sins separated him from the Lord God of Heaven.

- l) The law of God had ever been in his mind; He had meditated on it and longed for it (vv. 15, 20, 40).
- m) But the Law could not bring salvation to him.
- n) Only the Lord God could save him.
- o) Thus, he ends his psalm with a note of dependency upon the grace of God praying, Seek Your servant.
- p) Why should God go looking for him?
- q) Because he is a member of God's covenant people and holds onto God's Word. "For I do not forget Your commandments."
- r) He has observed God's commandments.
- s) The clue to vitality and to recovery is remembering the sustaining Word.
- t) Certainly, this final claim is true.
- u) It has been well documented by the whole of **Psalm 119**.
- v) A comparison of this final verse with the first stanza of Ps 119 reveals the motifs of path and seeking, as well as a focus on diligent observance of God's Word.

IN CLOSING,

I encourage you to go through **Psalm 119** in its entirety again and let it motivate you to spend time in God's matchless Word. Throughout this extensive prayer-meditation, we have seen that the Word, the testimonies, the statutes, the precepts, the judgments, the commandments, and the law of God have been the psalmist's preoccupation. It is the eternal self-revelation of the Living God. By His Word the psalmist has received truth, salvation, righteousness, justice, and peace. These are all words of the covenant. They express the gifts that Yahweh, King of Israel, has bestowed upon His people. Through them they are made secure, shown how to walk, defended from their enemies, and prepared for life eternal. The importance of God's Word cannot be stressed enough. It reveals the very nature of God as the God who speaks. Through His Word He is shown to be personal and to desire a personal relationship with us as He addresses us. By His Word we can know Him substantially. By His Word we can also know His will for our lives; we can learn how to live.

And how are we to receive His Word? There is only one answer. With humility. We are not to be among the proud who declare their independence from God. They believe their own words to be the final authority. They refuse to accept the divine Word from the out side. Their end, however, is destruction. But the person who comes to know the God who speaks will live forever. His life will be established because it is not built upon human opinion, but upon divine revelation.

As **Psalm 119** says, "Forever, O Lord, Your Word is settled in heaven" (v. 89).