

To know Him and Make Him Known

Our psalmist in this section [strophe] declares that his hope is received from the Word of God which renews his life. Because our God is unchanging, His Word does not change either. Therefore we can find hope from God's ancient Promises even when life is difficult.

Hope shines brightest in the darkness. Even though our psalmist is afflicted (v. 50) and scorned by the arrogant, he is sustained by hope. Through God's Word he receives comfort, hope, and life. God's statutes moved him to song as they guide and accompany him along life's way. Anchored in God's Word, he is unmoved and confident as he faces adversity (CIT).

The threefold use of the term "remember" in this section calls us to Remember God's Word [or promise], Remember God's Actions, and Remember God's Character so that we might be sustained by hope.

1) REMEMBER GOD'S PROMISES—vs. 49-50.

- a) [Zayin, 7th Letter of the Hebrew Alphabet.]
- b) Verse 49 begins as the psalmist calls upon God to remember **His Word** or promise, which He has given him and which is the source of his hope.
- c) "Remember the word to Your servant, in which You have made me hope."
- d) The cry is for God to remember to fulfill His **promises**.
- e) God has promised to do us good, to shower us with His blessings.
- f) God has promised to work on behalf of His faithful children.
- g) As we present God's promises back to Him and place our faith in His Word, hope shines brighter and brighter in our inner man.
- h) When we place our **hope** in God and remember His promises, our future brightens up.
- i) God will not **disappoint** hope authorized and encouraged by His own promises
- j) When they come to our mind it is because God wants us to bring them before His Throne of Grace.
- k) The word of God not only speaks comfort in affliction it revives us in our affliction as verse 50 indicates. "This is my comfort in my affliction, that Your word has revived me."
- l) The comfort the writer receives from God's Word is one of the main reasons he cherishes it (vv. 89,144,152,160).
- m) Because God answers His **promises** to His people, the psalmist finds comfort in his affliction.
- n) The Lord brought this comfort and restoration of life to His servant through His Word. God's Word not only sustains us in our affliction, it revives us in our affliction.
- o) **ILL--Patricia St. John has been described as an ordinary woman with an extraordinary faith. She poured out her life ministering to people in the neediest places on our planet. She was in Sudan when WAR REFUGES flooded that country. They had suffered terribly and had lost everything, yet those among them who were Christians still gave thanks to God. Patricia said that she stood one night in a crowded little Sudanese church listening to those uprooted believers singing joyfully. Suddenly a life-changing insight burned its way into her mind. She was trying to change their circumstances, but God was changing them in their circumstances. She**

realized that God "does not always lift people out of the situation. He Himself comes into the situation. . . . He does not pluck them out of the darkness. He becomes the light in the darkness."

- p) Does Patricia's insight apply to your life?
- q) What if, despite your fervent prayer, God doesn't see fit to deliver you from terrible circumstances?
- r) God's Word tells us that believers often suffer
- s) Heb. 11:35-38—"
- t) What then?
- u) God **promises** to stand by you.
- v) He'll strengthen you and give you the grace to rejoice, even in the face of suffering and loss.
- w) That's real triumph in tragedy.

2) REMEMBER GOD'S **ACTIONS**, 51-53.

- a) In verse 51 we find that though the arrogant scorned his faith he is determined to follow God's Word. "The arrogant utterly deride me, Yet I do not turn aside from Your law."
- b) Part of the affliction that he is experiencing is derision or contempt.
- c) The Lord **sustains** him when he being is ridiculed.
- d) In spite of the prolonged, severe, unjust treatment, he will not turn aside from following God's Word.
- e) These "proud" are those who refuse to submit to God's Word.
- f) They presume to be autonomous, independent of such authority or need.
- g) Thus they are those who "stray from Your commandments" (119:21).
- h) They castigate the psalmist for the foolishness of trusting in God's Word.
- i) Nevertheless, he will not turn aside from God's **law**.
- j) Let us be certain it is the Divine law that we believe, and then not let scoffers succeed in turning us aside from it either.
- k) His faith and hope are sustained by remembering the record of God's past actions as verse 52 states. "I have remembered Your ordinances from of old, O Lord, and comfort myself."
- l) God's law is ancient [from **eternity** past].
- m) It is grounded securely in His unchanging character and infinite wisdom.
- n) God's actions though they be from long ago and far away should still comfort and encourage us, for He is the same yesterday, today and forever.
- o) Neither God nor His principles have ever changed.
- p) These "judgments" or "ordinances" probably include the whole history of God's dealings with Israel.
- q) The thought of God's mighty acts, steel him for the suffering and rejection that he endures.
- r) Here is the basis of his hope.
- s) God will be true to His covenant. What He has done, He will do again.
- t) When we are in the battle for our **faith**, we need to remember what God has done for others and for us.
- u) Don't doubt in the darkness what God has revealed in the light.
- v) Verse 53 defines the wicked as those who forsake God's Word. "Burning indignation has seized me because of the wicked, who forsake Your law."

- w) As the psalmist renews his strength by remembering what God has done, he becomes zealously angry over those who reject God's law, who denounce its authority.
- x) The "**wicked**" make themselves enemies of God.
- y) They are **guilty** of rebelling against Him (Ps. 1:1).
- z) Their wickedness here is defined as abandoning God's revelation.
- aa) Indignation could also be translated 'furiously horrified.'
- bb) Sin is horrible in the eyes of all that are being sanctified.
- cc) When man determines that God's law no **longer** is authoritative, it should cause anguish and constructive action.
- dd) This great horror should drive us to our knees.
- ee) One day the horrifying prospect of standing before the Great White Throne awaits them.
- ff) If this great horror of the consequence of their sin would seize hold of us, maybe it would seize hold of the wicked.

3) REMEMBER GOD'S CHARACTER , 54-56.

- a) His righteous indignation causes the psalmist to express his own **attitude** toward God's word in verse 54. "Your statutes are my songs in the house of my pilgrimage."
- b) He not only **sang** about the Word, he sang the Word!
- c) While the wicked deny God's Word, the psalmist triumphantly and thankfully sings it as God's praise.
- d) As we go through difficulties we need God's songs or psalms [songs is literally "psalms."] to comfort and sustain along the way.
- e) Has the Word ever become so real to you that you found yourself singing spiritual songs?
- f) The "house of my pilgrimage" probably refers to this **world** which he is passing through.
- g) In just a little while our earthly **pilgrimage** will end and the believer will be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.
- h) In the meantime, the statutes of the Lord supply subjects and sustains for grateful praise.
- i) **ILL--Making good music is more than just hitting the right notes at the right time. H. V. Morton discovered this in England's Winchester Cathedral. He and a group of tourists had gone to the tower to see the bells. The guide told each of them to grab a bell rope and to pull it when he pointed to them. When they did so, each in his turn, the product was the tune "Abide With Me." They were amused, but that's all. They knew they had not really made good music; it was not a smooth performance.**
- j) The Christian life ought to make music.
- k) But it won't if it's a dull and mechanical keeping of certain rules.
- l) We know it is good to go to church, to give money, and to refrain from things like murder, adultery, stealing, and lying because it's far better than the alternative.
- m) We must **obey** God even when we don't feel like doing so.
- n) But as we grow in our appreciation of the wisdom of God's standards and in our love for the Savior, we will discover more and more that keeping His laws brings joy, peace, and a sense of exhilaration.
- o) We can have the same feeling that instrumentalists in a good orchestra experience when they play a Beethoven symphony.
- p) Doing God's will becomes our delight.
- q) When this happens, we can say with the psalmist, "Your statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage."
- r) Our lives will make beautiful music!

- s) There is no harmony in the heart without the joyful notes of obedience.
- t) In verse 55 the psalmist also thinks of God at night by meditating on the Word. "O Lord, I remember Your name in the night, and keep Your law."
- u) The name of the **LORD** is full of meaning and power.
- v) The name Yahweh [Jehovah] speaks of His sovereignty, His power, His self-caused existence.
- w) The name of God communicates His being, His character, His power, and His presence.
- x) Remembering His name will encourage our hearts to trust Him, obey Him and hope in Him and His Word. Remembering the name of God implies praying to Him and meditating upon Him. Meditation then turns to vigilance: "And I keep [or obey] Your law."
- y) In the season of affliction, and in the silent hours of the night, he remembers the name of the Lord, and is stirred up to keep the law.
- z) The psalmist made trusting and honoring God's holy name the practice of his life as verse 56 indicates. "This has become mine, that I observe Your precepts."
- aa) The section concludes by the general statement that his comfort, hope, and renewing flows from keeping the precepts of the Lord.
- bb) It has come to pass and been verified by his own experience, and as his own experience.

In CLOSING

Our psalmist overcomes his affliction (caused by his enemies) by remembering God and God's Word. Through the Word he receives comfort, hope and life (v. 50). His sorrow turns to song (vv. 53–54) as he remembers what God has done for him (vv. 54–55).

Let God's Word be your comfort and guide in every circumstance. For those that are guided by God's Word, may with boldness make its promises their plea.

Syeed was a BENGALI GUARD hire by missionary Tom McDonald to protect the property of a Christian hospital under construction in Bangladesh. As Jay Walsh tells the story in his book *Ripe Mangoes*, Syeed, who was a Muslim, noticed another worker, Monindra, reading an unfamiliar book.

One day Syeed visited Monindra to ask what he was reading. "That's a Christian Bible" he replied. The Bible was so precious to Monindra that when Syeed asked to see it, he refused. But Syeed would not be denied. For nearly a week he would sneak, into Monindra's quarters, take the Bible to a secluded place to read, and then return it unnoticed.

Then one day Syeed could not be found. After a short search, he was discovered kneeling before that Bible, calling out, "Lord Jesus, save me!" As the months and years passed, Syeed suffered severe persecution for his beliefs, yet he never backed down from the decision he made that day while reading a "borrowed" Bible. [JDB. Our Daily Bread. Radio Bible Class]

The Word of God is indeed powerful, It did for Syeed what it did for the author of Psalm 119. It gave him life, comfort, courage and hope.

Has the power of God's Word revolutionized your life? Many books can inform, but only the Bible can transform.

What verses in the Bible have changed your life? What verses could you show to someone who needs to understand the gospel?

