

To know Him and Make Him Known

As we read these eight verses I want us to see an underlying current in the attitude and mindset of the psalmist. Now understand that this theme or undercurrent does not simply appear in these 8 verses, but it has been constant throughout the chapter... I am simply pointing it out once again to you...

Look at the END of each of these 8 verses... let's read what it says:

- 57 - ...promise to keep YOUR WORDS – Hebrew – Dabar - utterances
- 58 - ...according to YOUR PROMISE – Hebrew – Im-rah' – Word of God
- 59 - ...to YOUR TESTIMONIES – Hebrew – Eh-dah' – God's divine law
- 60 - ...keep YOUR COMMANDMENTS – Hebrew – Mitz-vah – general command from God
- 61 - ...not forget YOUR LAW – Hebrew – Tor-ah – Divine instruction
- 62 - ...because of YOUR RIGHTEOUS RULES – Hebrew – Divine procedure
- 63 - ...keep YOUR PRECEPTS – Hebrew – Pick-ood – God's statutes/Law
- 64 - ...teach me YOUR STATUTES – Hebrew — kholke' – prescribed by God

In everyone of these verses the psalmist prefaces the law or commandment or instruction with an owner... the owner and administrator of this law or instruction is described with the personal pronoun of YOUR... with every word that describes these prescriptions for the people, the originator is God.

This reveals to us two very important basics when reading this chapter...

The psalmist understood from WHOM the Law comes... the originator of the Law he revered was the Creator God of the Universe.

The psalmist reveals in his understanding of this law that he held a personal relationship with the creator of these laws... who is the Creator of all things... this was personal for the psalmist! How can this affect us today? How does this apply to our lives? Well we too must understand that the Law of God... now found through Christ Jesus is a direct Law from the Creator of the Universe... it comes from God.

John 3:16 tells us, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..." Jesus Christ was God's gift to the world... and we must realize that Jesus Christ was, and still is, the Word incarnate! Jesus was and is God's WORD... to His creation!

Also we must realize and accept that Jesus Christ is our PERSONAL Lord and Savior. We all must come to Christ in a personal manner... no one else can be obedient for us... no one else can take our place in surrendering to Christ! We must do this on our own... and Jesus has promised to be a personal Savior!

This does not mean that our lives and Christianity is lived out in a personal and private manner... it is designed to be lived out and expressed in the community of faith...

Scripture tells us that ‘iron sharpens iron’ which gives us the basic premise that we are here FOR each other and to help each other in our spiritual maturity... we are NOT an island!

So the psalmist understood that God was the author of this law and that God’s law was something that was PERSONAL to him... Now with that premise locked in our heads, let’s look at our passage to see what he is saying in these 8 verses.

1) The Psalmist’s Find—vs. 57

- a) Here we see the personal nature of the psalmist’s understanding put forth...
- b) he says, “...the Lord is MY portion...” this does not lay claim to God as ONLY his... but that God is personal to him, and gives the implication that God is personal with whomever will trust in Him.
- c) With his understanding the God was personal to him, the psalmist then takes a step of personal responsibility on his part when he makes the statement, “...I promise to keep Your words...”
- d) Here he is obligating himself to obedience to the God whom has personally taken him under His wing and has given him the Law to guide his life.
- e) The Hebrew word for portion here is khay-lek which can mean a share of, or owning territory within... in other words what the psalmist is sharing here is that he has a portion in God’s kingdom...
- f) God has included him and has given him this portion.
- g) He goes onto to then issue a promise based on that portion he has been granted... that promise is to be obedient and to follow the law of God.
- h) How does this apply to us... it should be obvious to the believer... we have portion in the kingdom of Heaven because of Jesus Christ... In Him we have forgiveness of sin, redemption from the fall, and eternal life...
- i) SO as the psalmist follows his realization up with obedience... we should follow the same path... because of the portion we are given IN CHRIST, we should follow in obedience to His commandments!
- j) **be gracious to me according to Your promise—vs. 58**
- k) Here again the psalmist portrays a very personal nature about his relationship with God. He says, “...I entreat YOUR favor...” this indicates a relationship... to whom else do we ask favor... to whom else do we seek good will?
- l) Only those to whom we have a relationship, right?
- m) How often have you walked up to a complete stranger and said, “Hey I really need a favor...” We simply don’t do this, but it is fully reasonable and acceptable for us to go to one to whom we have a relationship and say, “Hey I need a favor...”
- n) Here the psalmist is confirming that relationship through the revelation of his trust in God coming to his help...
- o) The psalmist also indicates that he ‘entreats’ God... “with all his heart” this reveals the sincerity of the psalmist and also the completeness of His trust in God.
- p) He is saying everything within him believes God will be there for him...
- q) Finally the psalmist says, “...be gracious to me according to Your promise...”
- r) this indicates that relationship once again.
- s) The psalmist knows what God’s promise is and he is simply coming to God seeking God’s favor in granting that promise to him in his life!

- t) Here the psalmist has promised to be obedient and he then seeks a sort of comforting from God that will ensure him IN that obedience.
- u) I am going to promise to be obedient... please be gracious to me as you have promised... this is what he is saying!
- v) This is akin to our spiritual walk and stepping out on faith in obedience to God...
- w) We often pray, God is see your will, I know your promise, please keep me as I seek to be obedient to Your will!

2) The Psalmist's Feet—vs. 59

- a) Now in this verse we find the psalmist reflecting on his sinful nature...
- b) when he says, "...when I think on MY ways..." reflecting that HIS ways lead to no good, but the way of God's commandments lead to salvation and deliverance.
- c) The phrase 'my ways' here refers to the heart or inner most part of himself... the 'way' he would live if things were as HE desired!
- d) We are selfish and sinful beings... we want OUR way!
- e) The psalmist understands this...
- f) He then quickly says, "...I turn my feet to Your testimonies..."
- g) The phrase here 'turn my feet' literally means that the psalmist TURNED BACK from his own way... he literally turned AWAY from his own desire and turned TO the law of God for direction!
- h) How often do we seek instruction or direction and we rely on our own heart/desires to guide us!
- i) Have you ever heard the phrase, "You have to follow your heart..." OR "You have to be true to yourself..."
- j) Those platitudes are well meaning and sound like good advice, but knowing the heart of humanity...
- k) Scripture guides us away from following our own heart and toward the instruction of God revealed in His Law... and ultimately in Christ Jesus!
- l) Here the psalmist gives clear guidance on what needs to be done...
- m) 60I hasten and do not delay to keep Your commandments.**
- n) He then adds to that willing choice by stating that not only is he turning away from his own will and TO the will of God but he is NOT going to delay in doing so... he says, "...I HASTEN and do NOT delay..." in other words it is his FOCUS to be obedient!
- o) The psalmist is revealing an attitude here that sheds light on how important obedience is to him.
- p) It is paramount in his mind and in his life, so it comes FIRST!
- q) He hastens to do it... he does not DELAY in doing it!
- r) So often we find ourselves vowing obedience, but we never really get around to doing it!
- s) There is a saying... many attribute it to the Bible but it is not Scripture... it says, "The road to hell is paved with good intentions!"
- t) ILL--This phrase/proverb is credited to Bernard of Clairvaux and it refers to a person's words versus their actions... it means a person begins with good thoughts, promising to themselves to do the right thing, however, due to other priorities the good intentions go astray.**
- u) The psalmist does NOT want this to happen, and he is taking steps to MAKE service and obedience a priority in his life...
- v) he does this by NOT delaying in putting these things into action in his life!

- w) Let's use an example that may apply to us today...
- x) Take reading our Bible for instance...
- y) You may pray and tell God that you are going to read your Bible faithfully so you can know Him more intimately and that your knowledge of Him would increase...
- z) Prayer to Him about this is good intentions, but unless followed up with action, it is meaningless and you suffer in your walk with Him.
- aa) This can apply to anything as it pertains to our walk in Christ!
- bb) Let's take the attitude of the psalmist here and make our obedience a priority...
- cc) let us NOT delay in our obedience, let us hasten ourselves INTO obedience to Him and to His calling on our lives!

3) The Psalmist's Foes—vs. 61

- a) Here the psalmist continues in his constant desire to be faithful to God, and obedient to His law.
- b) His words, "...though the cords of the wicked ensnare me..." refer to the evil of this world tearing at His relationship with God.
- c) The 'cords of the wicked' is a reference to sometime in the life of the psalmist when he was surrounded by wicked men.
- d) This can also represent the circumstances and situations of life that deal harsh blows to our hearts and minds on a daily basis.
- e) The wickedness of this world surrounds us...
- f) it encircles us...
- g) but our focus must always be on the law of God...
- h) the Word of God...
- i) for the believer, on Jesus Christ the incarnate Word of God!

4) The Psalmist's Fervor—vs. 62

- a) The psalmist uses this verse to proclaim to those around him of his complete faith in God.
- b) Here he makes the statement that even at midnight... the deepest darkest time of the day...
- c) that which represents the deepest and darkest moments of our lives...
- d) EVEN THEN... he can rise to praise God! All because of God's law!
- e) For the believer today, we can have that same assurance as Jesus has promised, "...I will NEVER leave you nor forsake you..."
- f) We can know that no matter how evil the world becomes, we have Christ as our advocate and comforter for this life and ultimately Christ will deliver us FROM this world and the brokenness of it...
- g) ALL BECAUSE of who He is...
- h) Christ the Righteous Lord...
- i) Don't you revel in the joy and peace of knowing that even at the darkest times of life we can rely upon and trust in Christ to be there with us...
- j) His promise is NOT that trouble won't come our way or that EVIL will not attack, but that through it all, He will be there with us...
- k) sometimes He delivers us FROM it and sometimes He is there to be there with us THRU the difficulties...
- l) The psalmist reveals an attitude of fully trusting God... even when it seems hopeless!
- m) How is YOUR trust in God?

- n) I know that I find myself allowing my reactions to be based on my surroundings and the circumstances of life, and I have to FORCE myself to focus on God... what about you?
- o) I pray that I can do what the psalmist is saying here... that I will rise to praise God even when I cannot see reasons FOR praise!

5) The Psalmist's Friends—vs. 63

- a) Here the psalmist switches from praise to awe and reverence of God.
- b) Here he portrays his ultimate respect and honor for God.
- c) He says, "...a companion of all who FEAR You..." the word for FEAR here is the Hebrew word yaw-ray' which can mean actual fear, but the fear is based in awe and respect and honor of whom you are fearing...
- d) For us today... this would be someone of a high political station!
- e) Regardless of WHO holds the position... when the President of the United States comes around there is a sense of awe, respect and honor that accompanies that position... you may disagree with the current sitting President, but there is something to be said about the POSITION of the President that brings about a healthy fear from the citizens of our nation...
- f) So for the psalmist to say he is a companion with those who FEAR God, he is saying that he holds God up in reverence, and stands in awe of WHO He is...
- g) that is the Creator of all things... and he bestows honor on Him for WHO he is!
- h) As believers we must fall into this category... we should be in the number of those who fear, honor and respect God... not because of what He can do TO us, but for what He has already done FOR us... keeping in mind He could have cast us aside, but out of love He has included us... we must give Him all glory, honor and reverence in our lives, and that is where the psalmist is coming from in this verse...

6) The Psalmist's Facts—vs. 64

- a) The psalmist ends this particular stanza with a line of praise to God.
- b) He proclaims the greatness of God in that God's love is omnipresent!
- c) He says, "...the earth...is full of Your steadfast love..."
- d) When we look at the world today, there is sometimes a tendency for us to miss this...
- e) Even as believers we find ourselves losing sight of God's love made manifest in our world. All we can see is the darkness... all we can see is the circumstances and situations that press down on us... but the psalmist tells us that God's love is ever present...
- f) The word used here for God's steadfast love is the Hebrew words - kheh'-sed which means faithfulness, goodness and kindness.
- g) God's love is kind, God's love is good and most importantly, God's love is faithful! It is a love that can be relied upon... it is a love is a love that reaches out to those who do NOT know it... a love that desires all to KNOW it!
- h) And in this verse we have the psalmist crying out to God for Him to teach him His law!
- i) The psalmist realizes that God teaching him His law will change his heart and will cause him to serve and be obedient!
- j) In this we can see that the psalmist is placing a very HIGH priority in knowing and keeping the law of God in his life!
- k) He is placing it as a FIRST priority in his mind.
- l) I was reading Matthew Henry's commentary on this passage and here is how he summarizes these verses!

Matthew Henry's Commentary [Ps 119:57-64]

True believers take the Lord for the portion of their inheritance, and nothing less will satisfy them. The psalmist prayed with his whole heart, knowing how to value the blessing he prayed for: he desired the mercy promised, and depended on the promise for it.

He turned from by-paths, and returned to God's testimonies. He delayed not. It behooves sinners to hasten to escape; and the believer will be equally in haste to glorify God. No care or grief should take away God's word out of our minds, or hinder the comfort it bestows. There is no situation on earth in which a believer has not cause to be thankful.

Let us feel ashamed that others are more willing to keep from sleep to spend the time in sinful pleasures, than we are to praise God. And we should be more earnest in prayer, that our hearts may be filled with his mercy, grace, and peace.

Is God's law our priority? If not... the psalmist is giving us a template on how important God's law... the WORD of God should be for us as believers today! Let's pray...