

Osaka International Church – Guest Speaker: Pastor Alistair McKenna.

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Psalm 119 Part2

Psalm 119: v. 25-48. (NKJV)

Introduction

Last month I started a series on Psalm 119. Just in case you weren't at the service or didn't access it on You Tube, I would like to give you a brief introduction. The main reason for studying Psalm 119 is that it focuses 100% on the word of God, by that I mean the Bible. The Psalm is designed to reach the inner spiritual life of God's children. If we apply this Psalm to our personal lives it will enable us to grow in Holiness and to be able to cope with the persecutions and pressures that always accompany an obedient walk of faith. Knowing how to handle persecution is an important part of the teaching of Psalm 119. As I explained last month, the Psalm is divided into 22 sections of 8 verses per section. Each section begins with a letter of the Hebrew Alphabet and the Psalm is constructed in this way for ease of memorization. Last month we covered verses 1-24 and my three applications were these;

1. If you want to live a blessed and blameless life, then you must get to know your creator personally. The only way that you can do this is **through Jesus Christ, God's Son**. Jesus Christ is like a bridge between you and the God of the Bible.
2. Once you enter on the road to eternal life, you will need help to guide you and somebody to give you peace and joy in your life.
You will receive this by reading God's word, the Bible. Your soul will be refreshed by God's Holy Spirit, and your mind will be influenced by God and not by the culture and society we live in today.
3. As we read the Bible, we need to surrender our hearts to God, because we are his servants. Servants do what their masters tell them. We must make sure that we are doing **God's work for Him**, and not **our work for Him**. There is a difference. !!!
The difference is that sometimes we decide what **we want to do** for God, based upon what we want and what we can do. However God's work is what He calls us to do, and He will **equip and empower us to do that work**.

This month we have three more letters of the Hebrew alphabet and three more things to consider from God's word.

Psalm 119: v. 25-48. (NKJV)

My soul clings to the dust;

Revive me according to Your word.

²⁶ I have declared my ways, and You answered me;

Teach me Your statutes.

²⁷ Make me understand the way of Your precepts;

So shall I meditate on Your wonderful works.

²⁸ My soul ^[d] melts from ^[e] heaviness;

Strengthen me according to Your word.

²⁹ Remove from me the way of lying,

And grant me Your law graciously.

³⁰ I have chosen the way of truth;

Your judgments I have laid *before me*.

³¹ I cling to Your testimonies;

O LORD, do not put me to shame!

³² I will run the course of Your commandments,
For You shall enlarge my heart.

³³ Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes,
And I shall keep it *to the end*.

³⁴ Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law;
Indeed, I shall observe it with *my whole heart*.

³⁵ Make me walk in the path of Your commandments,
For I delight in it.

³⁶ ^[f] Incline my heart to Your testimonies,
And not to covetousness.

³⁷ Turn ^[g] away my eyes from looking at worthless things,
And revive me in ^[h] Your way.

³⁸ Establish Your word to Your servant,
Who *is devoted* to fearing You.

³⁹ Turn away my reproach which I dread,
For Your judgments *are good*.

⁴⁰ Behold, I long for Your precepts;
Revive me in Your righteousness.

⁴¹ Let Your mercies come also to me, O LORD—
Your salvation according to Your word.

⁴² So shall I have an answer for him who ^[i] reproaches me,
For I trust in Your word.

⁴³ And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth,
For I have hoped in Your ordinances.

⁴⁴ So shall I keep Your law continually,
Forever and ever.

⁴⁵ And I will walk ^[j] at liberty,
For I seek Your precepts.

⁴⁶ I will speak of Your testimonies also before kings,
And will not be ashamed.

⁴⁷ And I will delight myself in Your commandments,
Which I love.

⁴⁸ My hands also I will lift up to Your commandments,
Which I love,

And I will meditate on Your statutes.

1. Psalm 119: v. 25-v.32 is the Hebrew letter “Daleth”.

Title for this section is “Knocked Down but not Knocked out.”

The previous section ends with the Psalmist delighting in God’s word, and the first verse opens with the Psalmist being very depressed.

It is a known Bible fact, that the enemy of our souls, satan, attacks us the hardest when we are enjoying the blessings of God in our lives.

When things are going well, and we feel good, it is dangerous to relax and put aside our spiritual armour.

In Ephesians Chapter 6: v. 10-18 (N.K.J.) it tells us to put on our spiritual armour as a way of defending ourselves against the attacks of the enemy of our souls.

Quote these verses here in the N.K.J.

¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the ^[b]wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of ^[c]the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints

A famous Christian of the past called Andrew Bonar said this “We must be watchful after the victory as before the battle.”

When the Psalmist felt depressed and discouraged, he knew what to do.

The Psalmist prayed. In this first section we are told what the Psalmist prayed.

He prayed three things.

Firstly he cried to God to **“Revive him.”**

His enemies were slandering his name.(v.23) they were also restricting him,(v.61) they were lying about him,(v.69) they were causing him to suffer,(v.83) and finally they despised him. (v.141)

They even threatened his life in v.109. It is no wonder that the writer of this Psalm felt like an insect in the dust. However as it is with many Christians, when we seem at our very worst, God comes along and gives us His very best.

God gives us the GRACE that we need.

Quote 2 Corinthians Chapter 1: v. 3-7 in the New Living Translation.

³ All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. ⁴ He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. ⁵ For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ. ⁶ Even when we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your comfort and salvation! For when we ourselves are comforted, we will certainly comfort you. Then you can patiently endure the same things we suffer. ⁷ We are confident that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in the comfort God gives us

It is interesting to note that the Psalmist prayed this prayer quite often.

In fact he did it 11 times in this Psalm. I am happy to report that God answered his prayer every time. This Hebrew word is used quite a few times in the Bible

and it is more than just a preservation of our life. It involves a healing and a flourishing of our lives.

Illustration

If you go to Osaka Castle Park next Spring during the Cherry Blossom time, you will discover hundreds of trees at their very best. The beautiful pink fluffy cherry blossom, with a bright blue sky as a background is a wonderful sight. However If you go up to the same park in the winter, the trees are bare, and they look very dead and depressed. It can be like this in our Christian lives sometime. We get depressed and discouraged and we need reviving.

God is able to make our lives beautiful on the inside, so that we are also attractive on the outside. The beauty of Jesus shines forth in our lives when God revives us. God is able to Revive us, but we must **cry out to Him in prayer**, and He will answer.

Just a note of caution before we leave this point. The Psalmist says **“ Revive me according to your word”**

We must make sure that we are obeying God’s word in the Bible, if we are expecting God to Revive us. God knows when our hearts are sincere, and when we are without sin in our lives.

Secondly, in v. 26-27, the Psalmist acknowledges that he needs **“teaching”**
He says in verses 26 – “ Teach me your statutes” (N.K.J.)

The N.L.T. uses the word “ Decrees”.

So often in our Christian experience we say **“ How can I get out of this trouble?”**

However we should be saying, **“What can I get out of this experience?”**

In our times of trouble we need God’s wisdom as we work through this experience. If we don’t get God’s wisdom, then we may waste our time of suffering and not gain anything from that experience.

Quote James 1: v. 2-4 in the New Living Translation.

²Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. ³For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. ⁴So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

The Psalmist knew that there were still lessons to learn in the school of life, and he didn’t want to miss out on this learning. The Psalmist talked to God about what was happening to him, and God answered by giving him **wisdom and strength**. We can do the same too There is no difference between our problem situation and that of the Psalmist. By faith, we too can expect to see God’s blessing in the battles of life.!!!

Thirdly in v. 28-30, the Psalmist prayed “ Strengthen me”

What we need to understand here is that the Psalmist makes it clear that he is suffering because of his commitment to God and His word.

(We see that in v. 28, 50, 67, 71, 75, 83, 92, 107, 143, 153)

In v. 109 we are told that the Psalmist was actually risking his life to obey the Lord. The Psalmist didn't get angry over his enemies and ask God to destroy them. The Psalmist **wept for his persecutors** and handed them over to God. (see v. 115 & v. 136)

All the Psalmist wanted was **strength to keep living for God** and declaring God's word to those who would listen. The Psalmist discovered that all he needed was **"God's Grace"**

Quote 2 Corinthians Chapter 12 : v. 8-10 in the N.L.T.

⁸Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. ⁹Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. ¹⁰That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

When we find ourselves under pressure by the enemy, our first response is usually to pray that God will change our enemies, but perhaps our best response should be that God would change **US** and enable **us** to get the victory over our enemies. We will certainly grow and mature as Christians if we are able to pray this type of prayer.

Fourthly in v. 31-32, the Psalmist prays "Defend me"

This is a very important prayer. The Psalmist didn't want to bring shame to God's name. So what did he do? He turned the situation over to God by **FAITH**. This is important because when people lie about us and slander us we are tempted to think up clever schemes to defend ourselves and slander other people. If we do this then we are attempting to do God's work, and this is not right. **God has to defend us by Himself.**

As we hold on to God's word and God's promises, then God will do His work in His time, according to His wisdom. Faith in God delivers us from a very narrow place, where we seem to be confined to our own wisdom and strength, to a much bigger place, where God is active and working on our behalf. We can then rest in the knowledge that God will do His work in His way and in His time. So just to summarize this section. When you are in a difficult place, or depressed, or things are not going well, then you need to pray and cry out to God. Pray that God will Revive you, that He will teach you something in your trial, and that God will Strengthen you and defend you. And YES, God will do that for you, because His word the Bible teaches us that He will honour His word.

2. Psalm 119 : v. 33-40, Hebrew letter is "He", the title is "Ending well"

A Good beginning in the Christian life should result in a good ending, however that is not always the case. There are lots of people in the Bible who began their lives obeying God, but sadly they did not continue and ended their lives badly. In Genesis we are told that Abraham's youngest brother **Lot** began well, but chose to live near Sodom and fell into sin. Although Lot was rescued from

Sodom before it was destroyed, his wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt.

(Gen. 19: v.26)

Samson began well, he was dedicated to God to be a life-long Nazirite.

He was empowered by God to have **supernatural strength**. However he made some bad choices in life, and eventually gave in to a woman and revealed the secret of his strength. This led to his capture and death.

King Saul began well, but let pride and power overtake his life.

Eventually he was injured in a battle and took his own life to avoid capture and abuse.

(1 Samuel 31: v.4)

In the New Testament, Demas began well, but deserted Paul because he loved the world and its pleasures, more than Jesus and His work. (2 Tim.4: v.10)

In this section of the Psalm, the Psalmist teaches us the **essentials needed for a consistent life that ends well.**

We are given 5 encouragements that will help us to live and end well in our Christian life.

The first is “LEARNING”, found in v. 33-34.

The Psalmist begins with the words “teach me O Lord”

This cry from the writer is not just about academic understanding about God and His word. It is much more than this. The Psalmist wants to have illumination in his soul. He wants his **heart** to love the things that God loves. He wants to understand the character and working of a great and mighty God.

May I challenge to you this morning is to get to know God, better than you know your best friend.

When I went to Bible College over 35 years ago in Edinburgh, Scotland, the Principal, (Head of the College) said these words at the first meeting.

“ In this College you will have some great teaching about the Bible and its connected subjects, however the most important thing that you need to do over the next two years is to get to know God, deeply, intimately, and to trust Him 100%.”

This was very good advice, and Wendy and myself certainly got to know God over the two years that we were at Bible College.

Daniel 11: v. 32 says “ but the people **who KNOW their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.”**

It is not enough to know God’s word, you have to **know Him personally** and experience His love and care in your life.

The second thing the Psalmists says, that will help us live well, and end well is **OBEDIENCE. (v. 35)**

This obedience is not like a slave who obeys his master to avoid discipline.

It is like a grateful child who delights to please his or her parents.

It is doing God’s will from the heart.

Psalm 40: v. 8 in the N.K.J. says “ I delight to do your will, O my God, your Law is written within my heart.”

If we want to know God’s truth, we must be willing to obey God’s will.

The third challenge is DELIGHTING in God. (v. 36-37)

These verses remind us that our hearts and minds must be focused on the truth of God and not on material wealth, and the pleasures of this world.

Abraham looked for the heavenly city **and ended well**, but Lot looked at Sodom and **ended badly**. You can't delight in God if you are focusing on the things of this world. By focusing upon God and His word and desiring to do His will, then He will give us the things that we need in this life. It is not always what we want, but it will be what we need to continue to delight in God.

Psalm 37: v. 4 says "delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart."

When our hearts are in tune with God's heart, He gives us what we desire. And what we desire is what God desires for us.

The fourth challenge that will help us to finish well is "FEARING GOD**" (v.38-39)**

The fear of man is the fear that leads to bondage and defeat. (Proverbs 29: v. 25) However the fear of God is a fear that conquers every fear that we might have in life. The Psalmist was not afraid of his enemies, he was trusting in the promises of God. He knew the **power of God**, he knew **the wisdom of God**, he knew that he could trust in the **promises of God**, and God never let him down.

And God will never let you down also. It is not our promises to God that ultimately matter, but it is God's promises to us that really count. He is always able to deliver on His promises, even when we fail!!!

Finally the last challenge is in v. 40 where the Psalmist says that if we want to end well then we need a **LONGING** for God's truth.

When we long for something, we wait patiently for it to happen.

Many Christians today are longing for the second coming of Jesus.

It will come one day, but in the meantime, let us feed ourselves from God's word.

The Bible teaches us that God's word is like **honey, bread, milk and solid food**.

Let us be satisfied in God and through His word.

If we leave the service today and go down to McDonalds at Tamatsukuri Railway station for lunch, then by 3p.m. we are going to be hungry.

However instead of that, if you go to the curry man on the way, and have his large bowl of curry rice with whatever topping you like, then you will not need any more food until Monday. It is like this with God's word. If we read it, believe it, and apply it to our lives, then we will not desire the things of this world, because God satisfies our heart and soul.

3. The final Hebrew letter today is "Waw" and this section is about walking and talking. (v. 41-48)

In this section we hear several voices.

It involves God speaking to us, the enemies voice to us, our lives speaking to God and for God and finally God's people speaking to others.

In v. 41 it begins with God's voice speaking to us.

If we are reading the Bible every day, then God is definitely speaking to us through His word. I am presently reading through Jeremiah at the moment, and although it is quite a depressing book, there are times when God has spoken directly into my situation. Yes God does speak to us through His word. The real question is **“Are we listening to Him?”**

In v. 42 we are reminded that satan, speaks to us also.

The writer of the Psalm was oppressed by enemies who lied about him, slandered his name, and even threatened his life. When we are attacked by satan, our main weapon against these attacks is the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6: v. 17) **Only God’s truth can silence the devil’s lies.** Jesus used this method when satan attacked Him in **Matthew Chapter 4: v. 1-11.** Jesus was tempted three times by satan and each time he replied, “It is written.....” Jesus quoted directly from God’s word in the Old Testament. We need God’s word in our hearts, not only to keep us **from sin but also to equip us to answer those people who oppose us or ask us what and why we believe in Jesus.**

Quote 1 Peter 3: v. 15-17 in the N.L.T.

¹⁵ Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. ¹⁶ But do this in a gentle and respectful way. ¹⁷ Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. ¹⁷ Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong!

In v. 43 we are reminded that God’s people need to speak to God.

In this verse the Psalmist is talking to God.

The Psalmist is concerned that God doesn’t remove the promises that are given in His word. He is reminding God that **He must honour His word.**

In these days, most of God’s word was communicated by the mouth, and learnt from person to person. Therefore it was their minds that meditated on the truth of those words. This is why memory verses from the Bible are so important, because once we have memorized God’s word, then the Holy Spirit can bring it back to our minds when we need it. We are privileged today to have the written Bible, don’t waste your opportunity to memorize some of it.

In v. 44-45 we are told that the best defence of our faith is a transformed life.

Our obedience to God and His word, and our loving ministry to other people in need will demonstrate our faith far better than anything else.

In v.44 the Psalmist says that he is going to keep God’s Law continually, for ever and ever. The Psalmist says that he can walk in liberty and freedom, because he is no longer bound by sin. It is Jesus Christ who sets us free from the power of sin, so that we can enjoy freedom with God.

In John 8: v. 31-32 in the New Living Translation it says this

“ Jesus said to the people who believed in Him, you are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will **know the truth, and the truth will set you free.**”

Living the truth, sets us free to follow Jesus, and our transformed lives are a witness to the world.

Finally God’s people must speak to others. – v. 46-48.

If we truly love God and His word, we will not be ashamed to share His word, even with important people like **Kings and heads of Government.**

As I was studying this verse, I thought about how I could share my faith with the Queen of England, Elizabeth and the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson.

I thought that the best thing to do was to send them a copy of my book, which is called “Personal testimonies of Faith Stories”.

The Gospel is very clear inside the book, and the faithfulness of God to myself and Wendy over many years, shines forth like the Sun on a glorious day.

I will let you know if I get a reply. !!!

Sometimes we have to be bold and share our faith with those whom God gives us opportunity to do so.

May God help us to be faithful to Him in our lives, and in our witness for Him.

Amen.