

PSALM 119.129-136

psalm
God's Word 119

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A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

Psalm 119.129-136

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Introduction to Psalm 119.129-136

To *know* Jesus is more than merely an intellectual adventure. It is to *experience* Him in every facet of our soul and life always. Psalm 119.129-136 offers us an opportunity to think in a more varied manner about what knowing Jesus entails.

The psalmist uses many ideas to describe his experience of the Lord – wonder; allowing the Law of God to enter, give him understanding, and rearrange his soul; finding mercy; living obediently. All these must be part of our experience as well if we are to know the fullness of life as God intends it for us.

If you find these studies, or any of our other resources, helpful, we hope you will consider making a contribution to help support our work. You can do so by using the donate button at the website or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 360 Zephyr Road, Williston, VT 05495.

We hope you find this study of Psalm 119 instructive and helpful to equip you for your walk with and work for the Lord. Thank you for joining us.

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1 Surpassing Wonder

Pray Psalm 119.129.

Your testimonies are wonderful;
Therefore my soul keeps them.

Sing Psalm 119.129-131.

(No Other Plea: *My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*)

Your testimonies, Lord are sweet; I hide them in my soul.
Your words give light unto my feet, and make my thinking whole.
I open wide my mouth to You: Lord, feed me with Your Word!
I vow that all You say I'll do: I love Your precepts, Lord.

Read Psalm 119.129-136; meditate on verse 129.

Preparation

1.What did the psalmist say about God's testimonies?

2.That being so, what did he do with them?

Meditation

The Hebrew word פִּלְאוֹת (p-lab-OHT) derives from a verb that means to “be surpassing, extraordinary” or even “marvelous” and “beyond knowing” (cf. Ps. 119.18). I’m betting the psalmist had this word in mind from the beginning of Psalm 119 as *the* right word to begin the פ (p) stanza of his masterpiece. More than any other of these magnificent stanzas, Psalm 119.129-136 provides a glimpse into a heart that beats for and with the Law of God.

The psalmist is amazed and agog with wonder at the enormity, immensity, depth, height, riches, beauty, and bounty of the Law of God (“testimonies”). It’s good for us to think about the Word of God this way, because no matter how many times we’ve read it, or how deeply we have studied any part of it, there’s always more of Jesus to be discovered in God’s Word than we’ll ever know – exceedingly, abundantly more (Jn. 5.39; Eph. 3.20).

Wonder is a function of the imagination. The appearance of this word here reminds us that we need to take our time with God’s Word, making sure both to read, meditate on and study it daily and to linger over it, allowing our understanding and imagination to expand through the lush bounty of its teaching toward the full banquet of its meaning (Jer. 15.16). The more you wonder at the Word, the more it will fill your soul, and the more you will cherish and keep it.

Cultivate wonder for the Law of God and all His Word. It will never fail to delight and satisfy your soul.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.

We, not Alice, are the true inhabitants of Wonderland. And instead of a land filled with a Mad Hatter and Queen of Hearts, we live with Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, and God the Father and Creator of the universe and all that dwells within it.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ...
In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins,
according to the riches of His grace...” (Eph. 1.3, 7).

“...that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (Eph. 3.17-19).

Amazing. Astonishing. Awesome. Marvelous. Miraculous. Staggering. Stunning.

“Surpassing Wonder.”

For reflection

1. What are some ways you find the Word of God “wonderful”?
2. Describe your practice of wondering at the greatness of God and His Word.
3. Wondering about things takes time. How can you improve the time you have for considering how wonderful God and His Word are?

The Prophet does not simply mean, that the doctrine of the law is wonderful, but that it contains high and hidden mysteries. Accordingly he declares, that the sublime and admirable wisdom which he found comprehended in the divine law led him to regard it with reverence. This is to be carefully marked, for the law of God is proudly despised by the great majority of mankind, when they do not duly taste its doctrine, nor acknowledge that God speaks from his throne in heaven, that, the pride of the flesh being abased, he may raise us upward by the apprehension of faith. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Psalm 119.129

Pray Psalm 119.136.

Be sure to pray for the lost people in your Personal Mission Field, especially those you expect to see today. Ask the Lord to give you an opportunity to share something of His Word and love with them.

Sing Psalm 119.136.

(No Other Plea: *My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*)

Lord, see the world in lawlessness, how love has grown so cold.

Look down, O Lord, to save and bless; let grace and peace take hold.

Though many look on You with awe, rejoicing in Your Word,

I weep for those who void Your Law and spurn Your grace, O Lord.

2 Word In

Pray Psalm 119.130, 131.

The entrance of Your words gives light;
It gives understanding to the simple.
I opened my mouth and panted,
For I longed for Your commandments.

Sing Psalm 119.129-131.

(No Other Plea: *My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*)

Your testimonies, Lord are sweet; I hide them in my soul.
Your words give light unto my feet, and make my thinking whole.
I open wide my mouth to You: Lord, feed me with Your Word!
I vow that all You say I'll do: I love Your precepts, Lord.

Read Psalm 119.129-136; meditate on verses 130, 131.

Preparation

1. How did the psalmist describe his time in God's Word?
2. What was his attitude toward the Word?

Meditation

In this stanza the psalmist pours out his heart toward God and His wonderful Word. We glimpse here, perhaps more than any other stanza of Psalm 119, what it means to delight in the Scriptures. He uses two images in verses 130 and 131 to describe his relationship to the Word. First, He imagines the Word like an army, marching into the simple and humble dwelling of his soul, bringing liberation, light, and understanding. The poet John Donne expressed his longing for this in his "Holy Sonnet XIV". He needs God to "batter" His way into his soul, because he can't make it happen by reason alone:

Batter my heart, three-person'd God...
I, like an usurp'd town to another due,
Labor to admit you, but oh, to no end;
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.

In the second image, the psalmist envisions his time in the Word like a starving man feeding on that for which he has most longed. When this is our attitude to the Word it can have powerful effects in our soul, as C. S. Lewis wrote in his poem, "On a Theme From Nicholas of Cusa", which brings both of these images into focus:

But when the soul partakes of good
Or truth, which are her savoury food,
By some far subtler chemistry
It is not they that change, but she,
Who feels them enter with the state
Of conquerors her opened gate,
Or, mirror-like, digests their ray
By turning luminous as they.

Such poems – as well as many hymns and spiritual songs – can help to express the longing of our hearts for

God, with the result that that longing increases, and we love God and His Word more. Every true believer will seek such an attitude and disposition of the soul.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Our attitude and disposition toward the Word should be one of essential need and desperation:

“As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God.

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God” (Ps. 42.1).

And what is God’s response when we come to Him with this dire need?

“He split the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink in abundance like the depths.

He also brought streams out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers” (Ps. 78.15, 16).

Jesus has promised to give us “living water” (Jn. 4.10). He told the Samaritan woman at the well, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (Jn. 4.13, 14).

When we long exceedingly for this living, everlasting water which is Christ Jesus, and seek Him diligently in His Word, then God gives understanding even to we simple, and lights our pathway by the torch of His commandments (Ps. 119.130, 131). “For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light...” (Prov. 6.23).

We who live in His wonderland of mercy, grace, redemption, justification, and good works have seen and experienced things that others would not or could not see. But with this blessing comes great responsibility. We are the recipients of these words from the mouth of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ: “Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it” (Lk. 10.23, 24).

Because we have hungered and thirsted for His Word—His Law—and have sought the Light to enter our heart, conscience, and life, we have found peace. “Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble” (Ps. 119.165).

Yes, “Batter my heart, three-person’d God” to enable the Light to enter my life, to “mirror-like” digest the rays of this Light “by turning luminous as they.” And thus, bless my Personal Mission Field.

For reflection

1. How would you explain to a new believer the importance of regularly feeding on the Word of God?
2. What are some things that can keep you from hungering and longing for God and His Word?
3. How can believers encourage one another in nurturing a heart for the Lord?

The Scriptures show us what we were, what we are, and what we shall be. They show us the mercy and the justice of the Lord, the joys of heaven, and the pains of hell. Thus they give to the simple, in a few days, understanding of those matters, which philosophers for ages sought in vain. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Psalm 119.130, 131

Pray Psalm 119.132, 133.

It’s always appropriate to seek mercy and grace from the Lord, to help us in all our times of need. As you do, tell the Lord how much you love Him, and call on Him to direct your steps today.

Sing Psalm 119.132, 133.

(No Other Plea: *My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*)

Look on me, Lord, with mercy as on all who love Your Name.

Psalm 119.129-136

Direct my steps to keep Your paths, and all Your Word proclaim.
Yes, let Your Word my shelter be; rule over all my soul,
and keep me from iniquity; my every way control.

3 As God Looks on You

Pray Psalm 119.132.

Look upon me and be merciful to me,
As Your custom is toward those who love Your name.

Sing Psalm 119.132, 133.

(No Other Plea: *My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*)

Look on me, Lord, with mercy as on all who love Your Name.
Direct my steps to keep Your paths, and all Your Word proclaim.
Yes, let Your Word my shelter be; rule over all my soul,
and keep me from iniquity; my every way control.

Read Psalm 119.129-136; meditate on verse 132.

Preparation

1. Of what did the psalmist appear to be conscious in this verse?
2. How could he have confidence in asking what he did?

Meditation

Do you ever think about God, looking upon you? What kind of “look” would you expect to see in His face? Disappointment? Impatience? Irritation bordering on anger? Or one of tenderness, compassion, mercy, and understanding?

In fact, we might expect any of those depending on how we comport ourselves before Him. Of course, we want to think that God always looks upon us with mercy, His face shining with love and understanding and Him ready to give us strength and grace for all our needs. And He does, for we are His chosen children. But we want to see – to experience the sense of – that merciful look more continuously, without fearing the other “looks” we might more appropriately deserve.

And we can. There is a condition, however. We must love Him. We must love His very Name, His Word, His Law, and all His ways. If we love Him, we will delight in and keep His commandments, and He will accompany us with His Presence, looking upon us with mercy and supporting us in all our ways. We prove our love for the Lord – and our faith and salvation (Heb. 11.1; 6.9) – by delighting in His Word, meditating in it, clinging to it, and following its teaching.

It is God’s “custom” – actually, “rule” – to look with mercy on those who love His Name. The more we work at loving Him, the more we may expect to see that merciful look accompanying us in all our ways.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“The merciful man does good for his own soul...” (Prov. 11.17).

I know that God’s thoughts are not our thoughts, and our ways are not God’s ways (Is. 55.8); but are we so dissimilar that we don’t all appreciate someone who loves us and tries to do things to please us?

God seems to be saying in Psalm 119.132 that He does appreciate those who love His Name, and love His Law so much that they beseech the Holy Spirit to help them live in a way that causes Him delight.

“The earth, O LORD, is full of Your mercy; teach me Your statutes” (Ps. 119.64). Everywhere we look we see God’s mercy. We know of His mercy. We experience His mercy every moment that we draw breath. But we also know that we can experience His displeasure when we are disobedient to His Law. So, we ask Him to

teach us how to be merciful, as He is merciful.

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ...” (Eph. 2.4, 5).

Yes, His mercy overcomes our wretchedness. Yes, by His grace we have been saved (Eph. 2.8). And yes, He loved us even when we were His enemies (Rom. 5.8).

Think about your own children. When they were young, you loved them and taught them and trained them, and didn't expect that they would be interested in you as a person. But when they grow up, and everyone is an adult, one hopes that these little persons will be big persons who love you and are interested in you. I think the same is true for God. He does all the preliminary work of redeeming and reviving us, but He longs for us to love Him, to love His Name and His Law. Jesus said as much, “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (Jn. 14.15). And, “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you” (Jn. 15.14).

With these truths in mind we can confidently pray, “Look upon me and be merciful to me, as Your custom is toward those who love Your name” (Ps. 119.132).

*Jesus, the very thought of Thee, with sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see, and in Thy presence rest.*

*Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame, nor can the memory find
A sweeter sound than Thy blest name, O Savior of mankind!*

*O Hope of every contrite heart, O Joy of all the meek,
To those who fall, how kind Thou art! How good to those who seek!*

*But what to those who find? Ah! this, nor tongue nor pen can show,
The love of Jesus, what it is, none but His loved ones know.
(Bernard of Clairvaux, 1150)*

For reflection

1. Our relationship with God is one of mutual love. Why is it important to remember that?
2. How do you express your love for God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
3. Whom can you tell about the love of God today?

The believer, wearied with the cares of life and his conflicts with sin, pants for the consolations conveyed to him by means of the sacred word. And every one may pray, Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me as thou used to do unto those that love thy name. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Psalm 119.132

Pray Psalm 119.129-131.

Thank the Lord for feeding you with His Word. Ask Him to show more of the wonders of His salvation today and to know His mercy and grace for all your times of need.

Sing Psalm 119.129-131.

(No Other Plea: [My Faith Has Found a Resting Place](#))

Your testimonies, Lord are sweet; I hide them in my soul.
Your words give light unto my feet, and make my thinking whole.
I open wide my mouth to You: Lord, feed me with Your Word!

Psalm 119.129-136

I vow that all You say I'll do: I love Your precepts, Lord.

4 Every Step Ruled

Pray Psalm 119.133.

Direct my steps by Your word,
And let no iniquity have dominion over me.

Sing Psalm 119.132, 133.

(No Other Plea: *My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*)

Look on me, Lord, with mercy as on all who love Your Name.
Direct my steps to keep Your paths, and all Your Word proclaim.
Yes, let Your Word my shelter be; rule over all my soul,
and keep me from iniquity; my every way control.

Read Psalm 119.129-136; meditate on verse 133.

Preparation

1. What two requests did the psalmist make?
2. What was he hoping to avoid?

Meditation

Growing up in the post-war period in a very patriotic community, my brothers and I were members of the Sons of the American Legion. We did lots of cool stuff, but the coolest was marching in holiday parades, of which there were many.

We learned to march in step, listening carefully to the drum beat and the drill-master's "Left (pause). Left (pause). Left, right, left (pause, repeat)." You did *not* want to get out of step because, if you did, *everyone* would see it! Including the drill-master (yikes!). We had a little "hop-step" corrective we could do to put ourselves back in step whenever we became distracted for some reason.

I made good use of that little trick, because I was often busier listening to my friends hollering at me along the parade route, or looking for someone to wave to, than I was paying attention to the drum and the drill-master.

I hope I'm doing a little better in marching for the Lord. When I listen for His voice, speaking in His Word and reminding me by His Spirit, and follow His directions, I'm right in step with His perfect plan for my life.

But let me become distracted for a moment, and I'm stumbling all over the place. When anything or anyone other than the Lord has dominion over our attention, we need the hop-step corrective of confession and repentance to get back in step on the Lord's pathway.

And we'll all need it, from time to time. Make sure you know how to use it; at the same time, be more diligent at listening for the Lord's Word, so that you march according to *His* voice rather than some *different* drum.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

It took courage for the psalmist to pray: "Direct my steps by Your word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me" (Ps. 119.133). He is asking the All-Powerful Creator of the universe to direct his steps and to not allow any sin to have rule over his life. Risky business, that.

Saul wasn't praying for this to happen to him, but we can clearly see that God has the power to knock us off our horses when we are stepping outside of His plan for us (Acts 9.1-9). And here we see the psalmist asking for that same treatment. "Don't let me do anything outside the parameters of Your Law." Gutsy.

Paul, who was Saul, spoke from personal experience when he wrote these words to believers then, and to us now, “But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one. And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you. Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ” (2 Thess. 3.3-5).

We will stay in step with God’s direction when we are living according to His Law (Ex. 20.1-17). Do we have the courage to ask for this guidance and help? Are we that bold?

“Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my anxieties;
And see if there is any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 139.23, 24).

“Every Step Ruled.”

For reflection

1. If Jesus doesn’t rule your every step, what will?
2. Why is it better to have Jesus ruling our way than anything else?
3. How can you tell when something other than Jesus is ruling your steps?

By these words he shows, as he has often done before in other places, that the only rule of living well is for men to regulate themselves wholly by the law of God. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Psalm 119.133

Pray Psalm 119.136.

Pray for the lost people in your Personal Mission Field. Ask the Lord for an opportunity to talk with one of them today, and to enable you to show them Christ’s love.

Sing Psalm 119.136.

(No Other Plea: *My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*)

Lord, see the world in lawlessness, how love has grown so cold.
Look down, O Lord, to save and bless; let grace and peace take hold.
Though many look on You with awe, rejoicing in Your Word,
I weep for those who void Your Law and spurn Your grace, O Lord.

5 Ransom Me

Pray Psalm 119.134.

Redeem me from the oppression of man,
That I may keep Your precepts.

Sing Psalm 119.134, 135.

(No Other Plea: *My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*)

Redeem me from oppression, Lord, from those who hate Your way,
that I may keep Your holy Word and serve You day by day.
Shine on me with Your glorious face; Your servant, Lord, am I.
So teach me by Your holy Word; Your grace to me supply.

Read Psalm 119.129-136; meditate on verse 134.

Preparation

1. What did the psalmist want God to do for him?
2. Why?

Meditation

The word “redeem” or “ransom” seems strange here. Did God have to pay a ransom to free the psalmist from the oppression of the wicked?

The psalmist is identifying with Israel’s experience here. By the grace of God, a price was paid so that Israel could go free from oppression. That price was paid both at the expense of Israel’s enemies and through the death of innocent lambs. The ransom thus accomplished, God led Israel out into the wilderness and gave them His Law. He redeemed them to make them His own people. As His redeemed people, they were to keep His commandments.

In a larger sense, Israel’s redemption, and that ransom which the psalmist sought here, point forward to the work of Jesus. God redeemed all His chosen people by ransoming them from the oppression of sin, again, in two ways: at the expense of the enemy of our soul, who was bound with all his minions and is destined to eternal condemnation; and at the price of God’s own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. By binding the devil and taking our sins on Himself, Jesus redeemed us from sin’s oppression and set us free to live according to the Law of liberty and love.

We will live either under the oppression of men and sin or in the freedom of Christ and God’s Law. Only the grace of God can get us from oppression to freedom. Thus, like the psalmist, let us seek it day by day, setting all our sins aside and hastening, through our Lord Jesus Christ, to the precepts and statutes of God.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“...that I may keep Your precepts” (Ps. 119.134).

“By binding the devil and taking our sins on Himself, Jesus redeemed us from sin’s oppression and set us free to live according to the Law of liberty and love.” There appears to be only one reason that we have been saved besides, of course, God’s glorious grace, love, and mercy in doing so. And that reason is: We are to keep His Law and do His commandments and accomplish the good works that He has “prepared beforehand that we should” do (Eph. 2.10).

“Your hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding.” Why?
“That I may learn Your commandments” (Ps. 119.73). Created to do His will.

Upon the birth of John the Baptist, his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he prophesied about Jesus and His work, and about the work that all believers had been, and will be, called to do. He said, "...that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us...to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life" (Lk. 1.71, 74, 75). And that Jesus would: "...give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Lk. 1.79).

Although Jesus promised us peace (Jn. 14.27), our salvation is not about our happiness level. It has nothing to do with how wealthy or healthy we are or are not. But, it has everything to do with our response to God's gracious Gift, Jesus.

Solomon wrote: "Let us hear the conclusion of the matter:
Fear God and keep His commandments,
for this is man's all.
For God will bring every work into judgment,
including every secret thing,
whether good or evil" (Eccl. 12.13, 14).

Yes, ransom me, Lord; and I will set my heart on following You forever, to the very end (Ps. 119.112; Lk. 9.23).

For reflection

1. How would you explain the role of good works in salvation to a new believer?
2. How does the Law of God help us in doing good works?
3. Why is keeping God's Law a most appropriate "response to God's gracious Gift, Jesus"?

He delivers us for no other end, but that the fruits of our deliverance may be manifested in our life; and we are too perverse if that experience is not sufficient to convince us, that all who persevere in the unfeigned fear of God, will always abide in safety by his aid, although the whole world may be against them. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Psalm 119.134

Pray Psalm 119.129-131.

Seek the Lord for light and understanding for the day ahead, so that you may know how to escape the traps and snares of sin and live according to God's Word in all things.

Sing Psalm 119.129-131.

(No Other Plea: *My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*)

Your testimonies, Lord are sweet; I hide them in my soul.
Your words give light unto my feet, and make my thinking whole.
I open wide my mouth to You: Lord, feed me with Your Word!
I vow that all You say I'll do: I love Your precepts, Lord.

6 Rain and Shine

Pray Psalm 119.135, 136.

Make Your face shine upon Your servant,
And teach me Your statutes.
Rivers of water run down from my eyes,
Because *men* do not keep Your law.

Sing Psalm 119.134-136.

(No Other Plea: *My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*)

Redeem me from oppression, Lord, from those who hate Your way,
that I may keep Your holy Word and serve You day by day.
Shine on me with Your glorious face; Your servant, Lord, am I.
So teach me by Your holy Word; Your grace to me supply.

Lord, see the world in lawlessness, how love has grown so cold.
Look down, O Lord, to save and bless; let grace and peace take hold.
Though many look on You with awe, rejoicing in Your Word,
I weep for those who void Your Law and spurn Your grace, O Lord.

Read Psalm 119.129-136; meditate on verses 135, 136.

Preparation

1. What was it like for God to teach the psalmist His Word?
2. For what did he weep?

Meditation

Rain or shine, our psalmist longed for the statutes and Law of God. He experienced the sunshine of divine favor and strength as God taught him. Reading and learning the Law of God was like a warm day for our psalmist. He basked in the light of God's Word, grew by its warmth and power, and bore the fruit of righteousness in his proper season.

On the other hand, waters of sadness poured down his cheeks knowing that many people did not keep the Law. Such people rejected the warmth of God's love and preferred their own ways to His; thus, they robbed God of His glory and condemned themselves to wrath.

We show that we love God and His Word as we delight to learn and obey it and when we weep because of those who do not. We want everyone to know the Lord. We want all the people in our Personal Mission Field to know His love shining down on them, filling their souls and transforming them into the likeness of Jesus Christ, the Son of God's love. We must not be indifferent to the indifference others show toward God and His Word. Jesus wept over Jerusalem, and we should weep over those who do not or will not know the Lord.

Let tears rain down for the lost and hardened of heart, even as you stretch out in the Sonshine of God's love and soak up the warmth of His Word.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.

Solomon said, "To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven...a time to weep" (Eccl. 3.1, 4). And Jesus said, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matt. 5.4).

There are many things in this life that cause tears to flow from our eyes—unsaved children, parents who

don't know the Lord, friends outside of the Kingdom, governments that have turned their backs on God—all of which cause real sadness and pain. God knows we feel this and assures us that this is righteous mourning. It is a true reason to grieve.

Jesus Himself grieved: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!” (Matt. 23.37). That is an authentic word picture of righteous grieving for the lost.

We have this promise from Jesus: “Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh” (Lk. 6.21). Our grief for the lost, the tears we shed for them, the work we put into our Personal Mission Field to share Jesus Christ with those we find there, all these tears for those that do not keep God's Law, will one day prove to bring joy to our hearts, and hopefully theirs.

“Thus says the LORD:

‘Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears;

for your work shall be rewarded, says the LORD, and

they shall come back from the land of the enemy.

There is hope in your future, says the LORD,

that your children shall come back to their own border” (Jer. 31.16, 17).

And then the ultimate promise of tear-free living:

“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying.

There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away...Behold, I make all things new” (Rev. 21.4, 5).

The season to weep is now. The reason to work is now. There is a purpose for all this under heaven.

For reflection

1. Why should we weep for those who do not obey God's Law?

2. Why do we need God to shine His face on us if we are to learn and obey His Law?

3. How should you pray for the lost people in your Personal Mission Field? How about those who are saved?

Commonly, where there is a gracious heart, there is a weeping eye. Accept, O Lord, the tears our blessed Redeemer shed in the days of his flesh, for us who should weep for our brethren or ourselves. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Psalm 119.135, 136

Pray Psalm 119.132, 133.

Pray that God will light your path today by His Word and guard you against all temptation and sin.

Sing Psalm 119.132, 133.

(No Other Plea: *My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*)

Look on me, Lord, with mercy as on all who love Your Name.

Direct my steps to keep Your paths, and all Your Word proclaim.

Yes, let Your Word my shelter be; rule over all my soul,

and keep me from iniquity; my every way control.

7 Experience the Word

Pray Psalm 119.132, 133.

Look upon me and be merciful to me,
As Your custom is toward those who love Your name.
Direct my steps by Your word,
And let no iniquity have dominion over me.

Sing Psalm 119.132, 133.

(No Other Plea: *My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*)

Look on me, Lord, with mercy as on all who love Your Name.
Direct my steps to keep Your paths, and all Your Word proclaim.
Yes, let Your Word my shelter be; rule over all my soul,
and keep me from iniquity; my every way control.

Read Psalm 119.129-136; meditate on verses 132, 133.

Preparation

1. What kind of action is suggested in these verses?
2. What affections would the psalmist have been feeling?

Meditation

It's too easy to reduce Scripture reading and study to a merely intellectual activity. Of course, it's important to apply our minds to the Law and Word of God, thinking, reflecting, analyzing, summarizing, and so forth. But remember that Jesus is the central theme of all Scripture (Jn. 5.39), and He cannot be reduced to a mental construct.

To *know* Jesus is to *experience* Him in every facet of our soul and life always. Psalm 119.129-136 offers us an opportunity to think in a more varied manner about what knowing Jesus entails. Let's consider some words from this stanza to help us experience the Word more fully.

First, wonder (v. 129): Wonder is that gobsmacking-I-never-saw-that-before-would-you-look-at-that experience of having Jesus emerge from a passage of Scripture as if from a stereogram. We are wowed and humbled, excited and even a little fearful – all at the same time.

So, no wonder we open our soul wide for the Word to enter like a two-edged sword (v. 130)! Disrupt my mind, Jesus! Pierce my heart! Reset my values and priorities! Call on Jesus to refocus your thoughts, realign your affections, and reconfirm your choices. Wait in silence as He does so. Then hunger and thirst for more of the same (v. 131).

Naturally, that kind of exposure to Jesus will make you call out for mercy (v. 132), pleading to know, confess, and repent of your sins, and holding out your hands for Jesus to take you in His love.

Then off you go into your Personal Mission Field. Keep in step with the Word and Spirit as you march through your day, making sure that every next step and word lines up with what Jesus is doing in you (v. 133). And keep a sharp eye out for temptation so that you grow through rather than fall through it.

From time to time throughout the day, turn your face upward to heaven and let the knowledge of the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus Christ shine down on you (v. 135; cf. 2 Cor. 4.6). Then allow yourself, in the Sunshine of His love, to weep for lost people and all those who scorn God's Law (v. 136).

Jesus is with us always. Let's work harder at realizing His transforming power in all we do.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

When we take up the challenge of working harder to realize God's transforming power, we see that all power for change comes directly from Him. The psalmist realized this too. Let's listen to his requests: "Look at me; be merciful to me; direct me; don't let sin get me" (Ps. 119.132, 133).

It is as if we are all in a play, and before the director calls for "Action" we each claim our role. God is the character who does everything demanding power. He looks at us with eyes of love and sees Jesus and His work of redemption for us. He responds in mercy to us. He directs our steps and guides our lives through His Word. He protects us from evil and gives us the wherewithal to resist temptation and not fall into sin.

Next, we are given our role to play. We are instructed to sit in the light of His love, grace, and mercy. We are to stand in His forgiveness. We then get to rejoice in His Spirit living in us. We show delight in His Word. We emot and res pond conclusively in love for Him. Not a difficult character to play. How hard is it to show love to Someone Who loves you perfectly? Well, not hard at all.

In the real world there is one caveat, however, as we bask in His love for us: He has work for us to do in His Kingdom that some days seems harder to do than others. Here goes: "We love Him because He first loved us". On that we all agree. But "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also" (1 Jn. 4.20, 21). As glorious as the love is, you see, there is difficult and challenging work for us to do.

We are a people, blessed beyond measure. We are loved by God—fully, completely, generously, and mercifully. This knowledge will cause us to look "upward to heaven" to "let the knowledge of the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus Christ shine down on" us—to experience the Word fully and completely, which then gives us the impetus to get busy in our Personal Mission Field for the Kingdom's sake.

"Remember me, O LORD, with the favor You have toward Your people.
Oh, visit me with Your salvation,
that I may see the benefit of Your chosen ones,
that I may rejoice in the gladness of Your nation,
that I may glory with Your inheritance" (Ps. 106.4, 5).

That my actions may be full of love for You and others. Always.

For reflection

1. Is there a difference between *knowing* the Word of God and *experiencing* it? Explain.
2. Why is your Personal Mission Field a perfect place to work out your salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2.12)?
3. Make your own prayer out of these words: "Look at me; be merciful to me; direct me; don't let sin get me" (Ps. 119.132, 133). Pray this prayer throughout the day.

In vain does divine truth sound in our ears, if the Spirit of God does not effectually pierce into our hearts. The Prophet confesses that it is to no purpose for him to read or hear the law of God, unless his life is regulated by the secret influence of the Holy Spirit, that he may thus be enabled to walk in that righteousness which the law enjoins. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Psalm 119.133

Psalm 119.129-136

Pray Psalm 119.129-131, 134-136.

Wonder, understanding, longing, being shown mercy, walking, keeping, basking in, learning, weeping for:
Here are some ways to experience this stanza of Psalm 119. Ask the Lord to bring you to these experiences throughout the day.

Sing Psalm 119.129-131, 134-136.

(No Other Plea: *My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*)

Your testimonies, Lord are sweet; I hide them in my soul.
Your words give light unto my feet, and make my thinking whole.
I open wide my mouth to You: Lord, feed me with Your Word!
I vow that all You say I'll do: I love Your precepts, Lord.

Redeem me from oppression, Lord, from those who hate Your way,
that I may keep Your holy Word and serve You day by day.
Shine on me with Your glorious face; Your servant, Lord, am I.
So teach me by Your holy Word; Your grace to me supply.

Lord, see the world in lawlessness, how love has grown so cold.
Look down, O Lord, to save and bless; let grace and peace take hold.
Though many look on You with awe, rejoicing in Your Word,
I weep for those who void Your Law and spurn Your grace, O Lord.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. How would you explain to a new believer what it means to “wonder” about God and His Word?
2. What could you do to increase your hunger and thirst for God’s Law and all His Word?
3. Why is it important for believers to seek grace *and* mercy from the Lord?
4. How can you know when God’s face is shining upon you? Why is this important to know?
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from this part of our study of Psalm 119?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.