

PSALM 119.145-152

psalm
God's Word 119

T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

Psalm 119.145-152

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Introduction to Psalm 119.145-152

What is your heart's cry? That is, what are you most passionate about? What "winds your clock", as we say? How can you know? Well, ask yourself: What's first on your mind when you arise in the morning? What do you get excited about during the day? Where does your time go? What brings you joy? Satisfaction? Pleasure? What do you sing about?

The great desire of our psalmist's heart was that he might be revived by clinging to the Word of God and walking in all His ways.

And this is the focus of Psalm 119.145-152.

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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 Proof of Purchase

Pray Psalm 119.145, 146.

I cry out with my whole heart;
Hear me, O LORD!
I will keep Your statutes.
I cry out to You;
Save me, and I will keep Your testimonies.

Sing Psalm 119.145, 146.

(Festal Song: *Rise Up, O Men of God*)

With my whole heart I cry; hear me, O Lord, I pray.
Your statutes I will not deny but keep them every day.

I cry to You, O Lord; save me, O Lord, I pray!
Your testimonies and Your Word I keep and will obey.

Read Psalm 119.145-152; meditate on verses 145, 146.

Preparation

1. What does the psalmist want God to do?
2. What does he promise to do?

Meditation

The \bar{p} (*qoph*) stanza strikes me as having a kind of urgency about it, expressing the soul's longing for more of God's Law and salvation. We'll see that in various ways as we progress, but it leaps out at us here, with the psalmist twice reporting that he cries out to the Lord. We cry out when we're desperate, or confused, or perhaps overflowing with joy.

Notice what the psalmist cries out for: He wants God to *hear* him (v. 145), and he wants God to *save* him (v. 146). His sense of urgency is emphasized by the phrase "*my* whole heart". He is opening his soul to God about his deepest wants and greatest needs, which are to be found in God alone. To think that God would *hear* us when we pray is amazing. To think that He would *save* us is beyond comprehension. Who are we that God should do either of these for us?

We are His beloved, chosen children. Of course, He will hear us! Certainly, He will lead us into ever-deeper depths of saving mercy and grace! It's what our Father does for us because of Jesus, Who purchased us with His own blood.

And how shall it be known that we have been heard and saved? By our keeping the statutes and testimonies of God. Our response to God hearing our heart's cry is to renew our vow to keep His Word. And as His salvation takes deeper root in us, we will more gladly and consistently keep His Law.

No contradiction exists between Law and Gospel. They are manifestations of the grace of God. We are saved *by* grace *unto* grace, the grace that comes to light in obedience, touching others and leading to thanksgiving (2 Cor. 4.15). Grace for obedience is our proof of purchase. We should cry out for it every day.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.

We haven't struck a bargain with God, for we surely don't have the right. Nor have we offered a game of "Truth or Consequences" to our heavenly Father. That would be a more ridiculous notion. But what we have

done is explain our desperate need and offer ourselves in thanksgiving for His attention:

I cry out with my whole heart.

I cry out to You, O LORD!

Hear me.

Save me.

I will keep Your statutes.

I will keep Your testimonies (Ps. 119.145, 146).

That the God of all creation would hear us and save us is a miracle of His grace and mercy:

“LORD, what is man, that You take knowledge of him?

Or the son of man, that You are mindful of Him?

Man is like a breath; his days are like a passing shadow” (Ps. 144.3, 4; Ps. 8.4, 5; Heb. 2.6, 7).

Our response to His mercy and grace takes a threefold expression:

1. We willingly offer ourselves as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God. It is reasonable that we do this (Rom. 12.1).
2. From that position, we show our love, thankfulness, and appreciation to Jesus, our wonderful Savior (Jn. 14.15).
3. Thus we fulfill what we have been called to from the beginning of time. So, it is advisable that we do it (Eph. 2.8-10).

“Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I cry to You all day long” (Ps. 86.3).

“I love the LORD, because He has heard my voice *and* my supplications.

Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore I will call *upon Him* as long as I live” (Ps. 116.1, 2).

Moses summed it up for us beautifully:

“Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments...that you should act according *to them*...Therefore be careful to observe *them*...For what great nation *is there* that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God *is* to us, for whatever *reason* we may call upon Him? And what great nation *is there* that has *such* statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?” (Deut. 4.5-8).

We, too, are a people whose God is the Lord (1 Pet. 2.9, 10), and we have been given the privilege to cry out to Him day and night to hear us and save us; but our response must always be, “I will love, trust, and obey You forever, to the very end” (cf. Ps. 119.112). Proof of appreciation for our purchase.

For reflection

1. Why should we expect to “cry out” to God from time to time? What does doing so say about our faith in Him?
2. Offer yourself as a sacrifice; go into your Personal Mission Field to love; fulfill your calling. How does living this way “prove” that you have been “purchased” by the blood of Jesus?
3. What can you do to encourage other believers to make better use of our privilege of crying out to our Father?

Supplications with the whole heart are presented only by those who desire God’s salvation, and who love his commandments. Whither should the child go but to his father? Save me from my sins, my corruptions, my temptations, all the hindrances in my way, that I may keep thy testimonies. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Psalm 119.145, 146*

Pray Psalm 119.149.

Pray that God will revive you today, leading you ever more deeply into our great salvation and transforming you increasingly into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Sing Psalm 119.149.

(Festal Song: *Rise Up, O Men of God*)

Lord, hear my plaintive voice, revive me by Your grace;
in justice let my soul rejoice before Your holy face.

2 First Thing

Pray Psalm 119.147.

I rise before the dawning of the morning,
And cry for help;
I hope in Your word.

Sing Psalm 119.147.

(Festal Song: *Rise Up, O Men of God*)

Before the dawn I rise; Lord, hear me when I cry.
I hope in Your unfailing Word and will until I die.

Read Psalm 119.145-152; meditate on verse 147.

Preparation

1. When did the psalmist go to the Lord for prayer?
2. What was he seeking in prayer?

Meditation

The Lord promises that when we come to Him in prayer, we will find mercy and grace to help in our time of need (Heb. 4.16).

Which raises the question: When is our time of need?

For the psalmist, it was before the day began. Further, he knew he would need the Lord's help throughout the day ahead, so he came to the Lord to "cry for help" in prayer before the sun crept over the horizon and the activities of the day began to unfold.

But not just that. He came to be renewed in the hope God's Word holds out to us, new every morning. The Scriptures are filled with exceeding great and precious promises and utterly transforming truths that can launch us into every new day with hope and courage. As we feed on God's Word, first thing in the day, we replenish our soul's strength and turn the light of God's truth on the path ahead. Crying out for help as we feed on the solid food of God's Word, we tap into the Presence of the Lord. There, gazing upon the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4.6) and listening for the instruction and direction of His indwelling Spirit, we find the grace we need for the day's challenges, one day at a time (Matt. 6.34).

The psalmist's example suggests that early morning devotions – prayer, singing, reading, meditation – make good sense. Come to the Lord first thing in the morning. Establish yourself in His Presence. Let that early morning fellowship be a touchstone for the rest of your day, as you come back to the Lord and His Word for revival and renewal in all your ways.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

"Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week,
they came to the tomb when the sun had risen" (Mk. 16.2).
Indeed the Son had risen early in the morning!
We are so grateful that He did.
How exciting! How beautiful!

How early.

I struggle with sleep. At the right time, I mean. It is an odd problem, but many people have it. Let's just say,

to run a Bed and Breakfast is not in my wheelhouse. My confession is to highlight this point, today's verse is not meant to pile a load of guilt upon those of us who cannot always rise before the dawning of the morning. The truth is, sometimes we even greet the dawn having not slept a wink the night before. Regardless, and most necessary, our time in the Word must take precedence over all else.

Happily, the theme of this verse can be embraced by all. Whenever we sleep, or don't, as we face a new day, we should always face it first with time in the Word and prayer. Yes, even if we must get ready to go to work, or to church, or to take care of our children. If possible, our time with the Lord should be first on the agenda. It is the only way to go, for we most assuredly, must cry for help and strength to cope in the new day ahead.

So, whether we cry out to the Lord before dawn, or just sometime in the morning, He still hears our call for renewal and help in our time of need. Which is all the time. Our only hope is in Him and His Word. Throughout the day and the night. Forever and always.

“Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation.
Give heed to the voice of my cry, my King and my God,
for to You I will pray. My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD;
in the morning I will direct it to You, and I will look up” (Ps. 5.1-3).

Jesus comes first, whatever time it is.

For reflection

1. Why does it make sense to meet with Jesus first thing in the day?
2. What does it mean to seek the Lord for grace to help in our times of need?
3. How does God want to use you as an agent of His grace today?

Christians who enjoy health, should not suffer the early hours of the morning to glide away unimproved. Hope in God's word encourages us to continue in prayer. It is better to take time from sleep, than not to find time for prayer. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Psalm 119.147

Pray Psalm 119.152.

Thank the Lord for His sure and certain Word. Call on His Spirit to guide and empower you for obedience throughout this day.

Sing Psalm 119.152.

(Festal Song: *Rise Up, O Men of God*)

Your Word has been from old, established by decree.
More precious than the finest gold, Your Word gives life to me!

3 Prayer Watches

Pray Psalm 119.148.

My eyes are awake through the *night* watches,
That I may meditate on Your word.

Sing Psalm 119.148.

(Festal Song: *Rise Up, O Men of God*)

I seek You through the night to contemplate Your Word.
Bring my poor soul into the light; teach me Your Law, O Lord!

Read Psalm 119.145-152; meditate on verse 148.

Preparation

1. How did the psalmist approach the daily “watches”?
2. What did he do at those times?

Meditation

Some important insights to a disciplined life are pointed to here. First is the practice of making ready to pray and seek the Lord. The phrase “are awake” is perhaps better translated by “ready”, since the Hebrew verb **יָהַרְהַרְתָּ** (*qi-DAHM-ti*) means “to anticipate or go before to be in front, hence, to prepare or plan for in advance” (BDB Lexicon). The psalmist says his “eyes” are “ready” through the night watches.

This will make more sense if we remove the interpolated word “night” from “watches”, so that we have only “watches”, which perhaps refers to daily set times for prayer (cf. Ps. 119.164; Dan. 6.10; Acts 3.1). Our translation might then read, “I have prepared for each of the prayer watches of the day.” At certain times of the day the psalmist was ready for prayer and meditation. That’s excellent advice.

Many believers follow this practice, using a psalm or part of a prayer list at different times of the day to hang their day on prayer. Whether they pray three or five or seven times a day, having these set times for watching in prayer helps to keep communion with God lively and refreshing.

And by combining those times of watching in prayer with meditation on the Word of God, you ensure that God can speak to you as you set aside time to converse with Him. Keeping these prayer watches can go a long way to having that “pray without ceasing” lifestyle to which Jesus and Paul exhort us (Lk. 18.1; 1 Thess. 5.17).

One excellent way to get started in this practice is to begin your day praying a stanza of Psalm 119 before your reading and meditation on God’s Word. Pray one stanza each day and in 22 days you’ll have prayed through the whole of Psalm 119. Or, pray three stanzas of Psalm 119, spread throughout each day, and four on the Lord’s Day, and you’ll pray through Psalm 119 every week!

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Reading and meditating on the Words about the Triune God and communicating with Him in prayer are what life is all about. As Jesus put it, “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (Jn. 17.3). And if we are wise, we will pursue those Words as often as possible, regardless of the day, or the time, or the season. Psalm 119.148 loosely paraphrased says: “I’m awake. What should I do? Meditate on God’s Word.” Or another rendering, “Why am I awake? So I can meditate on God’s Word.”

Psalm 119.147 and 148 basically have the day covered. Day and night. Every second, minute, and hour is all

about living in our Personal Mission Field with Him, for His glory.

“O God, You *are* my God; early will I seek You;
my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You
in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.”

“When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the *night* watches.
Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings
I will rejoice” (Ps. 63.1, 6, 7).

Paul referenced day and night and time in his writing. His words guide us in how to walk in our Personal Mission Field during the time that we have been given. His theme is love for God and neighbor.

“Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law.

And *do* this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep;
for now our salvation is nearer than when we *first* believed.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand.

Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness,
not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts” (Rom. 13.10-14).

The catechism sums up our reason for being, our proper use of time, and what this life is all about:

What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

During all the watches of the day and night.

For reflection

1. How might you use Psalm 119 to help prepare you for reading and meditating in God’s Word?
2. Do you think having set times to pray throughout the day would help your walk with the Lord? Explain.
3. How will you improve your time in prayer and meditation, beginning today?

... *the night is an unseasonable time for discoursing upon the law of God; but at that season, when alone, he silently recalled to his memory what he had previously learned, so that he passed no part of the night without meditating upon the law.* John Calvin (1506-1564), *Commentary on Psalm 119.148*

Pray Psalm 119.145, 146.

Pray that God will prompt you and call you to prayer many times during the day. Be ready with words of praise and thanks and intercession for others.

Sing Psalm 119.145, 146.

(Festal Song: *Rise Up, O Men of God*)

With my whole heart I cry; hear me, O Lord, I pray.

Your statutes I will not deny but keep them every day.

I cry to You, O Lord; save me, O Lord, I pray!

Your testimonies and Your Word I keep and will obey.

4 Crying Out Loud

Pray Psalm 119.149.

Hear my voice according to Your lovingkindness;
O LORD, revive me according to Your justice.

Sing Psalm 119.149.

(Festal Song: *Rise Up, O Men of God*)

Lord, hear my plaintive voice, revive me by Your grace;
in justice let my soul rejoice before Your holy face.

Read Psalm 119.145-152; meditate on verse 149.

Preparation

1. How did the psalmist want God to hear him?
2. What standard for revival was he seeking?

Meditation

Let's not gloss over that "Hear my voice..." The psalmist evidently practiced vocal prayer. He was actually crying out loud. Probably not always, but at least some. And there are benefits to this.

First, when we're praying out loud we *bear ourselves* praying, and this can help to keep us on track in prayer. Praying silently, it's easy to drift into this, that, and the other without noticing, until suddenly we're off somewhere in a dark wood, wondering how we got here. Praying out loud is more organized, conversational and careful – as when you're talking with a friend. We have to think a little harder about what we're saying. Perhaps we'll put a bit more emphasis or inflection into our prayers, and thus make them more meaningful, even to us.

Second, praying out loud trains your brain to think more "prayerfully." I don't have any science here to back me up, but thinking combined with bodily action (talking) should cut a more reliable groove across the synapses of the brain. It's why, in foreign language classes, you do "out loud" drills, so that you're not just *thinking* in Spanish but forming your brain and mouth to *speak* it as well.

Is there a connection between praying out loud and how God receives those prayers? Is He more inclined to hear our prayers with *lovingkindness* when they are carefully phrased, thoughtfully spoken, and in a more conversational manner? Our psalmist might be seen to think so.

He sought reviving grace from the Lord, and in a form that brought the justice of God more to light in his life. Not that he wasn't just, he simply felt a need for a fresh vision, a greater sense of urgency, and more consistency in acting justly. Justice is the outworking of God's Law to its full extent. The psalmist wanted more of this in his life. And he knew where to get it. And how, for crying out loud.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

"...with liberty and justice for all." But not really. No flag or country can offer what only the Lord God can give us. His justice is perfect. And His lovingkindness supreme.

We count on His lovingkindness to hear us when we call to Him. And we plead with Him for revival according to His justice. Not the world's, but His alone.

"Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.
He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday" (Ps. 37.5, 6).

“For the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him” (Is. 30.18).

Nebuchadnezzar gave a cogent word of testimony about God’s justice, even though “he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws” (Dan.4.33). His detour into the animal kingdom was bestowed upon him for his hubris. But after he repented of his sin, his reason returned to him, and his thanks and praise went to God. “Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down” (Dan. 4.37). He experienced the judgment of God and deemed it just.

Isaiah relayed God’s words about Jesus and His works of justice, saying:
“Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased!
I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will declare justice to the Gentiles.
He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.
A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench,
till He sends forth justice to victory; and in His Name Gentiles will trust” (Is. 42.1-4; Matt.12.18-21).

We have been saved to trust in Him, therefore we cry out loud:
“Hear my voice according to Your lovingkindness;
O LORD, revive me according to Your justice” (Ps. 119.149).

God, in turn, calls us to fulfill the works of a godly life in our Personal Mission Field.
And what is it that He requires of us? To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with Him (Mic. 6.8).

God says: “But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream” (Amos 5.24).
Revive us in Your justice so that we can do justice. Then, in His kingdom, through the good works of His people, there may be liberty and justice for all.

For reflection

1. What is justice? How would you explain “justice” to a new believer?
2. Can we have true justice apart from the Law of God? Explain.
3. Do you pray out loud? Do you think praying out loud might help your prayer life? Explain.

To revive means “to cause to live.” With this word the psalmist begs God to transform his life, to breathe new life back into his soul. The psalmist does not want his obedience to be mechanical; he asks for a renewed spirit. The basis of his plea is God’s covenantal love and His just nature. Earl Radmacher (1931-2014), NKJV Study Bible Note on Psalm 119.149

Pray Psalm 119.147, 148.

Spread your needs before the Lord in prayer, calling on Him for grace to help throughout this day. Ask Him to give you a Word from Scripture that you can meditate on throughout the day.

Sing Psalm 119.147, 148.

(Festal Song: Rise Up, O Men of God)

Before the dawn I rise; Lord, hear me when I cry.
I hope in Your unfailing Word and will until I die.

I seek You through the night to contemplate Your Word.
Bring my poor soul into the light; teach me Your Law, O Lord!

5 Near and Far

Pray Psalm 119.150, 151.

They draw near who follow after wickedness;
They are far from Your law.
You are near, O LORD,
And all Your commandments are truth.

Sing Psalm 119.150, 151.

(Festal Song: Rise Up, O Men of God)

Those who forsake Your Word draw near in wickedness;
yet You are near, O God my Lord! Your truth will save and bless!

Read Psalm 119.145-152; meditate on verses 150, 151.

Preparation

1. From what are the wicked far?
2. Who was near to the psalmist?

Meditation

Sincere believers are temptation magnets. Wickedness seems to press upon or circle around them, because spiritual forces of wickedness in high places do not like being opposed. They have already enlisted multitudes of like-minded people and bred their moral and spiritual insecurities into them, so there's never any shortage of wicked people or spirits to test, tempt, try, and trouble those whose hearts are devoted to Jesus.

So get used to it. But not to the point of complacency.

Those who dangle temptations before you – whether they are spirits or people – seek to draw you far away from the Law of God, to join them in their miseries and sin. Be alert, Peter warned us (1 Pet. 5.7, 8). Get ready to resist those who, drawing near with their temptations would draw you far away from the Lord (Jms. 4.7, 8). Always remember that Immanuel is with you, and His truth is powerful to help you overcome temptation and stay near to the Lord (Phil. 4.13).

Make it your goal to stay near Him Who stays near to you always. Know that the desire of wicked men and spirits is to separate you from God and His Word, and thus to rob you of all true and lasting meaning, purpose, happiness, peace, and power. Their words and suggestions are lies; God's Word is truth.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

We don't like to think of ourselves, or people in our church, or family members, or friends as wicked; but sure enough, right here in Psalm 119.150, the wicked are referred to as those who are far from God's Law.

What does it mean to be far from God's Law? Is it a condition that anyone could be afflicted with at any given time? Do we ever ignore God's Law or follow someone else as our king? Or love and serve something else with more fervor than we love God? Do we ever tweak the commandments to serve our purposes?

Because God is near, He knows if we are straying away from Him and His Law. We draw comfort from His nearness, but we should also tremble and fear too. He doesn't miss a beat of our hearts and lives. "Whenever we sin it is in the Presence of the Lord. He has promised to be with us always, and that means He is with us as we set our feet on the path of rebellion, corruption, and sin." (*ReVision*, 10/28/22, www.ailbe.org)

To flee the condition of wickedness is of prime importance. James gives us the key: "Submit to God. Resist

the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you” (Jms. 4.7, 8).

Truth is what we seek. God’s Word is truth. Jesus is “The way, the truth, and the life” (Jn. 14.6). We have a choice, to let wickedness draw near or the truth of God’s Law. Samuel put this same choice before the people of Israel who had already made the bad decision to serve another king. He said to them, “Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king” (1 Sam. 12.24, 25).

Our God, Who is near, is full of love and forgiveness, ready to guide us into all truth:

“The LORD is righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works.

The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.

He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them.

The LORD preserves all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy” (Ps. 145.17-20).

When we stay near to God’s Law and submit to His truth, the desire to do wickedly will be the furthest thing from our hearts and minds. God will keep us in perfect peace when our mind is stayed on Him, because we trust in Him. (Is. 26.3). Far from wickedness and near to Him.

For reflection

1. How do you experience the nearness of God throughout the day?
2. How can remembering that God is near help you in resisting temptation?
3. What can you do to help those who are far from God and His Law come to know Him as near?

He encourages himself from the consolatory consideration, that God, when he sees his own people sore pressed, comes forward, seasonably to afford them succor. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Psalm 119.151

Pray Psalm 119.152.

Ask God to show you how His Word – testimonies, judgments, commandments, promises, precepts, and so forth – should lead you in working your Personal Mission Field today. Seek specific guidance for upcoming activities.

Sing Psalm 119.152.

(Festal Song: Rise Up, O Men of God)

Your Word has been from old, established by decree.

More precious than the finest gold, Your Word gives life to me!

6 Old Time, All Time

Pray Psalm 119.152.

Concerning Your testimonies,
I have known of old that You have founded them forever.

Sing Psalm 119.152.

(Festal Song: Rise Up, O Men of God)

Your Word has been from old, established by decree.
More precious than the finest gold, Your Word gives life to me!

Read Psalm 119.145-152; meditate on verse 152.

Preparation

1. What did the psalmist know about God's testimonies?
2. How long did he know this?

Meditation

The psalmist says that he knew "of old" that God's Word has eternal foundations. What does he mean by that?

He may be saying merely that he had long familiarity with the testimonies (Word) of God, and that he found them to be always reliable. For many years he had read, studied, meditated on, and put into practice whatsoever God testified in His Word, and his experience was that the Scriptures were true and trustworthy.

He also could be saying that he had learned from the studies of others that he could count on God's Law. That is, he perhaps included in his own study of Scripture reflection on the writings or testimonies of older teachers, or people from generations gone by, and that he learned from their testimony that the Word of God is reliable and sure. Thus, "from old" he found a continuing record of sound instruction and confidence in the Law and Word of God. This is one of the reasons we include a quote from those "of old" in our own reflections on Scripture, to demonstrate the ongoing reliability of Scripture's teaching as discerned by our forebears in the faith.

The Word of God is founded in eternity. Its beginnings are eternal. Its continuing validity, durability, and reliability are sustained from the eternal Presence of God. And the Word will continue true and unchanging for all eternity to come.

All the more reason to read, study, learn, follow, and share this incredible gift from God.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

About Jesus, the promised One, the Ruler in Israel, we are told that His "goings forth are from of old, from everlasting" (Mic. 5.2). He is the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and Omega; He has always been and always will be (Jn. 1.1-5). We just describe it as of old.

Everything glorious and wonderful about God is surely of old. And although He is eternal, we are stuck in time for now, so this is how we contemplate His time. "Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses, for they are from of old" (Ps. 25.6).

We are called to join Him in His work of old and bring this Word forward into our Personal Mission Field. And more likely than not, someone in our past took this mandate seriously and spoke to us, years ago, about our glorious Savior, and God's plan of redemption for us.

When Paul wrote to Timothy, he spoke of this transfer of the knowledge of God from one generation to the next. He said that he was filled with joy, “when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also” (2 Tim. 1.5). Lois to Eunice to Timothy. As Christian parents it is incumbent upon us to share the Law of God and the Good News of Jesus Christ with our children. As Moses said, “You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up” (Deut. 6.7). So they too can know of old about God’s testimonies.

Paul went on to instruct Timothy a step further. He was glad that Timothy knew the Word of old; now he instructed him to do the Word. “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3.14, 15). The salvation must come through his faith in Christ Jesus. Not his grandmother’s or mother’s faith.

This is the point where the responsibility falls directly upon each person—either to accept or reject all those wonderful truths that have been known of old. Head knowledge about the Scriptures is much needed; but unless that knowledge travels from our head to our heart and out into our life it is of little use. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...” OK. But to what end? “...that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3.16, 17).

Regardless of how long “of old” is for us, we know Him now. And knowing Him now, He has a Word for us: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28.18-20).

“Old time, all time.”

For reflection

1. Why does it matter that the Word of God is grounded in eternity?
2. Is it important to be taught by previous generations of those who have known the Word of God? Explain.
3. What is your responsibility for passing on the ancient Word of God to the next generation of believers?

This indeed is the chief point of faith, That the word of God is not only distinguished for fidelity and steadfastness for a time, but that it continues unchangeable for ever. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Psalm 119.152*

Pray Psalm 119.149-151.

Pray about the day ahead. Where will you especially need to be aware of the Lord’s Presence, and to seek His mercy and grace for your time of need? Prepare for those times now, as you are in prayer before the Lord.

Sing Psalm 119.149-151.

(Festal Song: Rise Up, O Men of God)

Lord, hear my plaintive voice, revive me by Your grace;
in justice let my soul rejoice before Your holy face.

Those who forsake Your Word draw near in wickedness;
yet You are near, O God my Lord! Your truth will save and bless!

7 Cri de Coeur

Pray Psalm 119.145-147.

I cry out with *my* whole heart;
Hear me, O LORD!
I will keep Your statutes.
I cry out to You;
Save me, and I will keep Your testimonies.
I rise before the dawning of the morning,
And cry for help;
I hope in Your word.

Sing Psalm 119.145-147.

(Festal Song: *Rise Up, O Men of God*)

With my whole heart I cry; hear me, O Lord, I pray.
Your statutes I will not deny but keep them every day.

I cry to You, O Lord; save me, O Lord, I pray!
Your testimonies and Your Word I keep and will obey.

Before the dawn I rise; Lord, hear me when I cry.
I hope in Your unfailing Word and will until I die.

Read Psalm 119.145-152; meditate on verses 145-147.

Preparation

1. How did the psalmist cry to the Lord?
2. For what did he cry?

Meditation

A heart full of emotion or passion will sometimes engage the voice to cry out loud. We see this in various ways. A basketball player who slam-dunks over an opponent will puff himself up and cry out. Parents whose child does something special on the athletic field will jump to their feet and shout. Get an unexpected gift, raise, or promotion, and you might squeal a bit in excitement. Stand up to protest an injustice and feel your passion rise with the intensity and volume of your speech. And so on.

Our psalmist's *cri de coeur* was rather different, and much more to be desired. The longing of his heart was that he might keep the Law of God – His statutes, testimonies, commandments, and Word. This was the first thing on his mind in the morning (v. 147), and it occupied his meditations during the daily hours of prayer (v. 148). So greatly did he desire to keep God's Word that he cried out for the Lord to revive him (v. 149) and to be a shield for him against encroaching wickedness (vv. 150, 151). And he was right in making this his heart's cry, for he knew the commandments of God to be truth and His testimonies to have everlasting foundations (vv. 151, 152).

What is your heart's cry? That is, what are you most passionate about? What "winds your clock", as we say? How can you know? Well, ask yourself: What's first on your mind when you arise in the morning? What do you get excited about during the day? Where does your time go? What brings you joy? Satisfaction? Pleasure? What do you sing about?

How you answer these questions will tell you where your heart's desire is lodged. If your *cri de coeur* is not for God and His Word, then you need to spend more time in His Presence, gazing on His beauty, seeking to be

taught of Him, and waiting on Him to bring you into His goodness and joy (Ps. 27). There is no greater joy, no greater thrill, no greater excitement, no greater purpose, no greater satisfaction than to know, love, and serve our Lord Jesus Christ. Make this your *cri de coeur* and you will know His Presence, promise, and power increasingly, day by day.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Cri de coeur is an anguished cry of distress or indignation, an impassioned outcry, appeal, protest, or entreaty. A cry of the heart. It does go far beyond sports, work promotions, or our children's achievements. We only cry out in this way when our need is understood, and our helplessness embraced.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is Good News. But we will only embrace and appreciate it when we understand our desperate need for it. And we cannot understand that apart from knowing the Law of God, and wholeheartedly realizing that we cannot keep it, and therefore are in urgent need of a Savior to shield us from the wrath of God. "Hear me. Save me. Help me!" (Ps. 119.145-147) In God's eyes our sin makes us "all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind have taken us away" (Is. 64.6); and "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3.23). "Hear me. Save me. Help me!" (Ps. 119.145-147) And miracle of miracles, He hears this cry of the heart. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6.23).

Jesus told a story about a creditor who freely forgave the debt of two people. One owed him a huge amount and the other a meager amount. Jesus then posed a question, "Which one of the two will love [the creditor] more?" The answer, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." Jesus then spoke about the woman whose loving attention to Him had precipitated the conversation, "Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little" (Lk. 7.41-47).

Our sins, which are many, are forgiven. So, we love and appreciate God very much. And how can we show God that we love Him? By keeping His commandments (Jn. 14.15). "I will keep Your statutes. I will keep Your testimonies. I hope in Your Word" (Ps. 119.145-147).

God has heard our wholehearted cry for help. He has saved us. Now what do we do? Paul gave us the answer: "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4.1-3).

Cri de coeur to esprit de corps.

*Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow.*
(Hall/Grape, 1865)

For reflection

1. What is your heart cry to the Lord today? What do you most need from Him? What do you most want to say to Him?
2. Why are we so easily distracted from increasing love for God day by day? How can you carry your heart cry into and throughout the day, to help keep you focused on the Lord and His calling?
3. In what ways do you need the reviving grace of God today?

This verse may be so read and connected as that in the end of it the Psalmist may show what he desired in crying; and thus the meaning would be, that as he was inflamed with an intense desire to keep the law, he continually made supplication to God on that subject. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Psalm 119.145*

Psalm 119.145-152

Pray Psalm 119.148-152.

Thank God for His Word and Presence. Praise Him specifically for ways you have known His Presence recently, and for how His Word has guided or grown you.

Sing Psalm 119.148-152.

(Festal Song: *Rise Up, O Men of God*)

I seek You through the night to contemplate Your Word.
Bring my poor soul into the light; teach me Your Law, O Lord!

Lord, hear my plaintive voice, revive me by Your grace;
in justice let my soul rejoice before Your holy face.

Those who forsake Your Word draw near in wickedness;
yet You are near, O God my Lord! Your truth will save and bless!

Your Word has been from old, established by decree.
More precious than the finest gold, Your Word gives life to me!

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. What is the relationship between salvation and keeping God's Word?
2. How can you make sure that meeting with God is the first thing you do each day? What will need to change in your schedule for this to be so?
3. Why is it a good idea to have set times of prayer throughout the day?
4. How can knowing God's Presence help us to resist temptation and sin?
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.