

PSALM 119.49-56

psalm
God's Word 119

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A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

Psalm 119.49-56
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Introduction to Psalm 119.49-56

This stanza brings into focus the discipline of remembering God's Law and all His Word.

God remembers His Word, and He expects us to remember it, too. The comfort and help He promises in His Word depend on us remembering it as earnestly as He does.

The idea of remembering has a deeper nuance in Hebrew than we tend to give it in English. We'll see just how important it is that we make remembering God's Word an all-encompassing aspect of our walk with and work for Him.

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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 Living and Powerful

Pray Psalm 119.55, 56.

I remember Your name in the night, O LORD,
And I keep Your law.
This has become mine,
Because I kept Your precepts.

Sing Psalm 119.55, 56.

(Wycliff: *All for Jesus*)

In the night Your Name attends me, as I keep Your holy Word;
and Your precepts all befriend me, as I keep them, glorious Lord.

Read Psalm 119.49-56; meditate on verse 49.

Preparation

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

Meditation

The τ (ZY-in) stanza of Psalm 119 begins with a very important insight: God remembers His Word.

Wait. Is there some danger He might *not*? Like He might forget something that He promised? Or fail to keep His Word because it slipped His mind?

Not at all. The Hebrew verb *zab-CAR* (זָכַר) is typically translated “remember” but it’s meaning is much more active than we typically associate with that word. So, for example, Moses wrote that God “remembered” His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob when Israel was in Egypt. That is, He was continually attending to it, carrying it out actively and powerfully to accomplish the deliverance of His people.

The writer of Hebrews describes the Word of God as “living and powerful” (Heb. 4.12). This gets at the sense of what the psalmist means here. He wants God to “remember” His Word, to make it a living and powerful agent in his soul, causing him to hope and be encouraged and to bring forth new life in him (v. 50). For unless the Spirit of God works with the Word of God in us, we will not benefit from our reading or study. But if we couple faithful reading and study with continuous prayer that God’s Spirit will be at work within us, teaching us His Word and making us willing and able to do what pleases God (Jn. 14.26; Phil. 2.13), then we will truly know the living and powerful Word working to transform us into the image of Jesus Christ.

God’s Word is filled with precious and very great promises, all of which resolve into Jesus (2 Pet. 1.4; 2 Cor. 1.20). We partake of the divine essence – His living and powerful Word – as God actively applies those promises to us, and we, filled with hope, eagerly reach out our hands and hearts to receive them.

A world of wickedness surrounds us. (vv. 50, 51, 53). We need to “remember” God’s Word (v. 52), knowing that He will do so also as we look hopefully to Him in prayer.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.16.

Sometimes, because we are human and sinful and lazy and curious, we might wonder, “Why?”

Why are we to remember?

Why do we care if God remembers?

And remembers what?
Why do we have to obey?
Why do we care?
Why should we care?
What is the point?
What's all the fuss?
Aren't we already saved?

Well the answer to all of these questions is this: we are to be more like Jesus. Long and short. Quick and simple. Straight up. That's the answer. The whole truth, nothing but the truth, so help me God. Seriously.

“But if we couple faithful reading and study with continuous prayer that God's Spirit will be at work within us, teaching us His Word and making us willing and able to do what pleases God, then we will truly know the living and powerful Word working to transform us into the image of Jesus Christ.”

“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, that through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1.2-4).

“Partakers of the divine nature.” Why? To be like Jesus.

“But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2.16). Why? To be like Jesus.

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Col. 3.1-3). Why? To be like Jesus.

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus...” (Phil. 2.5). Why? To be like Jesus.

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And then why all the fuss? Why should we care? What is the point? Simple.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which were prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2.8-10). Why?

Because the people in your Personal Mission Field are in dire need of you to be like Jesus, and for the good works that Jesus wants to do through you.

This is their hope, and ours (Ps. 119.49).

For reflection

1. Why should we be encouraged to know that God “remembers” His Word?
2. What is God trying to do in your life with His Word? What evidence do you see that He is making progress?
3. How can you encourage your fellow believers to keep seeking Jesus in the Law and Word of God?

Psalm 119.49-56

Those that make God's promises their portion, may with humble boldness make them their plea. He that by his Spirit works faith in us, will work for us. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Psalm 119.49-56*

Pray Psalm 119.49.

Thank God that He “remembers” His Word and actively works to increase its power in your life. Call on Him to remember His Word for everything that lies ahead of you this day.

Sing Psalm 119.49.

(Wycliff: *All for Jesus*)

Lord, remember all the good Word You have spoken unto me!
For I ever hope in You, Lord as I serve You joyfully.

2 Comfort along the Way

Pray Psalm 119.53, 54.

Indignation has taken hold of me
Because of the wicked, who forsake Your law.
Your statutes have been my songs
In the house of my pilgrimage.

Sing Psalm 119.53, 54.

(Wycliff: *All for Jesus*)

Indignation grips me, Savior, for those who forsake Your Word.
All Your statutes, all Your favor, I will sing with joy, O Lord!

Read Psalm 119.49-56; meditate on verses 50, 51.

Preparation

1. What “affliction” was the psalmist experiencing?
2. Where did he turn for “comfort” and to stay on the Lord’s pathway?

Meditation

All those who desire to live godly lives in the Word of God will suffer persecution. All. Not some (2 Tim. 3.12). That persecution may be as harsh as torture and death. More likely, it will be some sort of daily affliction which seeks to diminish your faith and divert you from the pathway of the Lord.

The psalmist regarded it a matter of “affliction” that the “proud” held him in “great derision.” They mocked his trust in the Lord, scorned him for his puritanical ethics, and chided and challenged him to join them in their folly. But he turned to the Law of God for revival and for the full and abundant life of God (v. 50). The Word of God gave him life by the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn. 6.63). Thus he resisted the temptations of those who mocked him, took comfort in the Lord, and persevered in God’s pathway (v. 51).

The psalmist shows us two important lessons: First, expect temptations and afflictions, which all have as their aim to undermine your faith and interrupt your journey in the Lord. Count on it: they’re out there. Second, be ready *in* the Word and *with* the Word to *obey* the Word in the face of every temptation. You’ll need to have the Word of God hidden in your heart so that you can call on it in your time of temptation (Ps. 119.9-11). And you’ll need the power of the Spirit to help you obey the Word and keep to the pathway of everlasting life.

Don’t let the naysayers, finger-pointers, and proud mockers get you down. Keep your eyes on the pathway and reach out your hands to the Lord for mercy and grace to help in your time of need (Heb. 4.16). He will give you the encouragement, instruction, and power you need to continue in Him.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

God gives us encouragement, instruction, and power to continue walking on His path through the Word of God. In this Word we find guidance and comfort to deal with those in our life who are afflicting us. And sometimes, as Jesus said, “a man’s enemies will be those of his own household” (Matt. 10.36; Mic. 7.6).

Okay. We have been given instruction on how to deal with that affliction.

If it is our parents: “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you” (Ex. 20.12).

If it is our spouse: “You shall not commit adultery” (Ex. 20.14)

If it is anyone else: “You shall not murder” (Ex. 20.13).

No doubt, a lot of these are interchangeable.

And the all-constraining words about our attitude of love for all those out there who afflict us: “Love suffers long and is kind...love does not behave rudely...is not provoked...thinks no evil...bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails” (1 Cor. 13.4-8). Throws a right disappointing wet blanket on our anger.

In our affliction, in suffering derision, unkindness, betrayal, hatred, and anything else that causes us pain, God is with us. “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10.13).

He has given us the way to cope—what we are to do and what we are not to do. And He has given us the strength to bear it. “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12.9).

Your Word has given me life and Your Law has given me the way to live my life (Ps. 119.50, 51); and our Personal Mission Field is where all this excitement happens. Every day. Continually. Through the ups and downs. Comfort and control through Christ for the journey.

For reflection

1. Why should we as Christians expect others to harass or persecute us? How should we respond when they do?
2. God comforts us in our afflictions. How does He do that? How do we experience that comfort?
3. How can believers encourage one another to bear up under afflictions of various kinds?

The word of God speaks comfort in affliction. If, through grace, it makes us holy, there is enough in it to make us easy, in all conditions. Let us be certain we have the Divine law for what we believe, and then let not scoffers prevail upon us to decline from it. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Psalm 119.49-56

Pray Psalm 119.50, 51.

Pray to know the Presence of the Lord and the guidance of His Word as you work your Personal Mission Field today.

Sing Psalm 119.50, 51.

(Wycliff: *All for Jesus*)

This my comfort in affliction, this my comfort in all strife:
that Your Word is my redemption, giving me eternal life!

Though the proud deride and taunt me, I will trust Your faithful Word.
Let Your judgments from of old be all my comfort, holy Lord.

3 The Law of Comfort

Pray Psalm 119.52.

I remembered Your judgments of old, O LORD,
And have comforted myself.

Sing Psalm 119.52.

(Wycliff: *All for Jesus*)

Though the proud deride and taunt me, I will trust Your faithful Word.
Let Your judgments from of old be all my comfort, holy Lord.

Read Psalm 119.49-56; meditate on verses 52.

Preparation

1. What did the psalmist remember?
2. How did that help him?

Meditation

The context for verse 52 is verses 50 and 51, the affliction that the psalmist experienced from the derision heaped on him by the proud. Such affliction can be discomfoting, but the psalmist knew how to restore his peace.

He “remembered” God’s judgments, which are from “of old” – that is, from eternity. We can assume that the sense of “remember” here is the same as verse 49, an active and detailed attending to all the Law, to saturate the soul and shape the life. God remembers His Law, but we must remember it as well if we would know the happiness that comes from it.

The psalmist says he comforted himself by remembering the eternal judgments of God. That’s a bit like saying you refreshed yourself on a hot day with a glass of lemonade. The lemonade does the refreshing, but you must make or fetch it, then drink it down.

So it is with the Law of God, which abounds with refreshment for our soul and comfort in our times of trial. We must diligently apply ourselves to the Law so that the comfort it contains can permeate our soul with peace. Reading, meditating, memorizing, and obeying are the keys to unlocking the comfort God’s Law can bring. The “of old” Law reminds us that God is eternally unchanging, and that His Word will never fail. His Spirit is at work within us as we comfort and fortify ourselves by “remembering” the Law of God day by day (Ps. 1; Phil. 2.12, 13).

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

I remember His judgments of old, and when I do, I am comforted (Ps. 119.52). Because no matter what happens to us, the history of God and His plan for us through Jesus and the Holy Spirit will never change. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13.8).

And encompassed in His unchangeableness is God’s vision for humanity. Us.

“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,
just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world,
that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love...” (Eph. 1.3, 4).
There it is in print. He chose us from eternity past. What a memory!

When we feel adrift and confused... “Such affliction can be discomfoting, but the psalmist knew how to restore his peace.” And so do we. We can always think on the memories we have in our hearts and minds about the creative beginning of the world (Gen. 1.1), and the glorious Creator. Then we can think on an even greater remembrance of the appearance of our Savior, Jesus Christ (Jn. 1.1-4).

These memories restore our equilibrium no matter how shaky the ground feels under our feet.

We can then rummage through the memories we have of God’s faithfulness to Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Ruth, Samuel’s mother Hannah, Elijah, Elisha, Daniel and his three friends, Queen Esther, Job, and on and on. Person after person that experienced trials, heartaches, and healing comfort from God—enveloped in the Law of Comfort.

That God is our God.

“The LORD sat enthroned at the Flood, and
the LORD sits as King forever.
The LORD will give strength to His people;
the LORD will bless His people with peace” (Ps. 29.10, 11).

Think on these things, remember, and be comforted. (Phil. 4.8)

For reflection

1. What is one memory you have of how God has worked in or for you? Why is it important to remember such things?
2. Why is it important that we understand that God’s Word is unchanging?
3. Whom will you encourage today with the memory of what God has done to comfort and encourage you?

God’s judgments of old comfort and encourage us, for he is still the same. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Psalm 119.49-56*

Pray Psalm 119.50, 51.

Thank the Lord for all the ways He has comforted, strengthened, encouraged, or otherwise worked in you for good. Go forth in the confidence of His Presence and comfort.

Sing Psalm 119.50, 51.

(Wycliff: *All for Jesus*)

This my comfort in affliction, this my comfort in all strife:
that Your Word is my redemption, giving me eternal life!

Though the proud deride and taunt me, I will trust Your faithful Word.
Let Your judgments from of old be all my comfort, holy Lord.

4 Be Angry. And Rightly So.

Pray Psalm 119.53.

Indignation has taken hold of me
Because of the wicked, who forsake Your law.

Sing Psalm 119.53, 54.

(Wycliff: *All for Jesus*)

Indignation grips me, Savior, for those who forsake Your Word.
All Your statutes, all Your favor, I will sing with joy, O Lord!

Read Psalm 119.49-56; meditate on verse 53.

Preparation

1. What has “taken hold” of the psalmist?

2. Why?

Meditation

Let’s work back-to-front on this verse. First, there are those who forsake the Law of God. They are wicked. Period. This only makes sense. Since the Law of God is holy and righteous and good (Rom. 7.12), to forsake that standard is to follow what is unholy, unrighteous, and evil.

Here let’s not just think about all those “pagans” and “unbelievers” out there. Let’s think about all those pastors and teachers who have taught their people either that the Law doesn’t matter, is no longer binding, or has become, as one theologian put it, “a dead and a useless thing.” Or who by neglecting to teach the Law invite their people to forsake it.

And let’s remember as well those professing Christians who just can’t find the time to meditate on God’s Law day and night (Ps. 1) and who are thus prosecuting their “walk” with the Lord on-the-fly (Prov. 14.12).

Yeah, that’s wicked. That should make us angry. And those folks may well be saved, but we should be indignant to the point of fervent heat that they have such a wicked view of God’s Law. For whatever “rationalizations” or “justifications” they apply to forsaking the Law of God, they will, in due course or as seems best to them, apply to God’s entire Word as well.

The Hebrew verb זָלַעַפָּה (*zab-lub-AH-phab*) means raging heat, as of fever or a burning wind. It can also be translated “zeal”, but here the meaning seems to be burning inward rage. This is a proper exercise of anger because it remains within and does not boil over into action. It’s possible to be angry without sinning, and it’s even proper to do so, as in a situation such as is outlined here. Rather than give in to anger, however, we must turn our thoughts to the beautiful and peaceable Law of God (Ps. 4.4).

And make sure that we don’t become a focus for some believer’s righteous indignation because of our own neglect of the Law of God.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

To neglect the Law of God is tantamount to ignoring God altogether.

Imagine yourself as a parent. It is your responsibility to love, guide, nurture, and constrain your beloved children. And for all your concern, love, wisdom, and sacrifice, you are ignored and unappreciated. I’d say

those are some pretty wicked children. And a little stupid too. (Oh, we don't say stupid.) Anyway, you get the point. God is our heavenly Father, and if we ignore Him, we are wicked. No two ways about it.

Let's hear what Solomon has to say about this:
"Those who forsake the law praise the wicked,
but such as keep the law contend with them" (Prov. 28.4).

"He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul,
but he who is careless of his ways will die" (Prov. 19.16).

"He who justifies the wicked, and
he who condemns the just,
both of them alike are
an abomination to the LORD" (Prov. 17.15).

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:
Fear God and keep His commandments,
for this is man's all" (Eccl. 12.13)

And frankly, when we read what the wisest person who ever lived has to say about keeping God's Law, and we decide we know better? That seems rather foolish. Or someone else decides they know better? That is truly something to be indignant about. And if we feel indignant, do we need to wonder how God feels?

An angel has some clear words on this topic: "If anyone worships the beast... [i.e., a wicked person] ...he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation..." (Rev. 14.9, 10). We do not even want to go there.

Keep the Law. Show God that you love Him, for by so doing you will not engage the rage and indignation of God or others.

For reflection

1. Why should we feel indignation about people not keeping the Law of God?
2. What does our neglect of the Law say about our love for our Father and His Word?
3. Resolve that you will not neglect the Law of God, but will learn to delight in, love, and obey the Law of love. What will that require of you today?

On the contrary, the prophet asserts that he was seized with horror, because, though he considered the long-suffering of God, on the one hand, yet, on the other, he was fully persuaded that he must, sooner or later, call for condign punishment. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Psalm 119.53*

Pray Psalm 119.49-52.

Remind yourself before the Lord that many people do not love Him, do not care about His Word, and will not appreciate your talking about Him and the Gospel. Pray for them, and pray for yourself, that God would increase love in you for the lost.

Sing Psalm 119.50, 51.

(Wycliff: *All for Jesus*)

Lord, remember all the good Word You have spoken unto me!
For I ever hope in You, Lord as I serve You joyfully.

Psalm 119.49-56

This my comfort in affliction, this my comfort in all strife:
that Your Word is my redemption, giving me eternal life!

Though the proud deride and taunt me, I will trust Your faithful Word.
Let Your judgments from of old be all my comfort, holy Lord.

5 Songs for the Journey

Pray Psalm 119.54.

Your statutes have been my songs
In the house of my pilgrimage.

Sing Psalm 119.53, 54.

(Wycliff: *All for Jesus*)

Indignation grips me, Savior, for those who forsake Your Word.
All Your statutes, all Your favor, I will sing with joy, O Lord!

Read Psalm 119:49-56; meditate on verse 54.

Preparation

1. How did the psalmist regard God's statutes?
2. When did he do this?

Meditation

A literal translation of the first part of this verse would be "Your statutes were songs to me..." That's a bit different from saying, as the NKJV has it, "Your statutes have been my songs." That would imply that the psalmist sang the statutes of the Lord, but, unless he was including the psalms or the *Song of Moses* (Deut. 32) in that singing, this would be perhaps the only indication in Scripture of singing the Law of God *per se*.

My sense is rather that he so delighted in the Law, and found it to be such a source of comfort (vv. 50, 52), that thinking and meditating on it, as well as living out its teachings, were like singing to him. He was engaged both soul and body, thoughts and affections, and in a deeply personal manner – and he enjoyed it. Such engagement with the Law of God led him to sing – such as whatever he may have intended as melodies for Psalm 119.

And why not? As we grow to see how much love, understanding, wisdom, and foresight the Law contains; as we understand the blessings and promises it entails, and the glory it reveals; and as we see in God's Law Jesus in His glory, looking upon us with love, we will love the Law like singing, too. And for the work of your Personal Mission Field and the entirety of your journey through life – "the house of my pilgrimage."

Let the Law of God be like songs to you, and you will remember and be blessed by it continuously.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13:52; Psalm 119:162

A song of joy wells up in my heart when I think about God's Laws; and how everything He does is done decently and in order. How He created the world, how He saves us, and how He loves us. My heart overflows! "My heart is overflowing with a good theme; I recite my composition concerning the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer" (Ps.45.1). A personal love song to the Lord.

The joy we feel as believers is a gift from God. He gives us the gift; He gives us the joy. "He has put a new song in my mouth—praise to our God; many will see it and fear, and I will trust in the LORD" (Ps. 40.3). They fear because it is the beginning of knowledge (Prov. 1.7); and we are blessed because expression deepens impression so the more we trust Him and sing our song to Him, the more we trust Him.

We have our song, that fills our life, on our pilgrimage, through our Personal Mission Field. And we sing our song of praise each time we thank God and obey Him.

Songs are often sung antiphonally with alternate singing by two choirs or singers. And that is what happens

between us and God. We sing to Him, and He sings back to us.
“The LORD your God in your midst,
The Mighty One, will save;
He will rejoice over you with gladness,
He will quiet you with His love,
He will rejoice over you with singing” (Zeph.3.17).

Does it get any better than that?

Singing together with the Lord on the journey.

For reflection

1. How can the Law of God be like “songs” to us?
2. How is it helpful to think of our life in Jesus as a journey? Where are we headed? What guides our way?
3. How can you encourage your fellow believers to enjoy the Law as a song along their way in life?

Singing is an indication of joy. The saints are pilgrims in this world, and must be regarded as God's children and heirs of heaven, from the fact that they are sojourners on earth. By the house of their pilgrimage, then, may be understood their journey through life. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Psalm 119.54*

Pray Psalm 119.49-52.

Remember that God remembers His Law, and that He calls on you to remember it, too. What can you do to strengthen your remembrance of God's Law today? How about singing these verses over and over?

Sing Psalm 119.49-52.

(Wycliff: *All for Jesus*)

Lord, remember all the good Word You have spoken unto me!
For I ever hope in You, Lord as I serve You joyfully.

This my comfort in affliction, this my comfort in all strife:
that Your Word is my redemption, giving me eternal life!

Though the proud deride and taunt me, I will trust Your faithful Word.
Let Your judgments from of old be all my comfort, holy Lord.

6 Safety in the Name

Pray Psalm 119.55, 56.

I remember Your name in the night, O LORD,
And I keep Your law.
This has become mine,
Because I kept Your precepts.

Sing Psalm 119.55, 56.

(Wycliff: *All for Jesus*)

In the night Your Name attends me, and I keep Your holy Word;
let Your precepts all befriend me, as I keep them, glorious Lord.

Read Psalm 119.49-56; meditate on verses 55, 56

Preparation

1. When did the psalmist remember God's Name?
2. To what did that lead?

Meditation

I recall our daughter Kristy once lamenting sadly to me that she often found that, during her nighttime prayers, she fell asleep praying. She felt bad about this, but, as her father, I assured her that, if she were resting in my arms, talking to me about her day, offering words of appreciation and love, and fell asleep doing so, I would be thrilled.

So is our heavenly Father. I find nighttime, when the day is through and I lie down to sleep, an excellent time for remembering the Lord and His many benefits, beginning with the day just completed. I will sometimes run through a litany of His names: Creator, Almighty, King of kings, Lord of lords, and so forth, pausing on each to let the particular name suggest as much as possible and praising Him accordingly. This is also a good time for breathing prayers, where you say one phrase as you breathe in – “This has become mine” – all the blessings you’ve mentioned thus far – and the second phrase as you breathe out – “because I have kept your precepts” (v. 56), always concluding the last phrase with “Thank You, Father!” (2 Cor. 4.15).

And I will often fall asleep during one or another of those prayers.

This stanza has been about the comfort the psalmist knew from keeping the Law of God (cf. vv. 50, 52, 54). Surely this is one of the great comforts of knowing God and living within His Law: “I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; /For You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety” (Ps. 4.8).

Fall asleep each night recalling God's blessings, meditating on His great Name, and rejoicing in all that has become yours because of His Word, and our Father won't mind if you drift off into sleep in His arms.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

And all this comfort and sweetness has come to us transactionally: “This has become mine, because I kept Your precepts” (Ps. 119.56).

God shows us love, and we show love back to God by keeping His commands (Jn. 14.15). In Ezekiel 18 culminating a litany of situations demonstrating obedience to God, verse 9 says: “If he has walked in My statutes and kept My judgments faithfully—he is just; he shall surely live!”

For believers, the sweetness of God's care for us on earth is just a foretaste of our relationship with Him in the new heavens and the new earth. Our faith is "here and now" and "there and then."

"For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing" (1 Thess. 5.9-11).

"You, O LORD, are our Father; our Redeemer from everlasting is Your name" (Is. 63.16).

Comfort, sweetness, and safety. All found in that Name.

For reflection

1. What other words or ideas come to mind when you think of "comfort"?
2. "Remembering" the Name of the LORD can help us in keeping His Law. How should you remember His Name?
3. Keeping His Law (precepts, v. 56) enables us to remember the Name of the LORD. Do you see a circuit or a reinforcing loop here? Explain.

In the season of affliction, and in the silent hours of the night, he remembers the name of the Lord, and is stirred up to keep the law. All who have made religion the first thing, will own that they have been unspeakable gainers by it. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Psalm 119.49-56

Pray Psalm 119.49-54.

Spend some time in silent meditation, thinking of ways God has remembered His Word to you, and ways you have remembered His Word in serving Him. Give Him thanks and praise.

Sing Psalm 119.49-54.

(Wycliff: *All for Jesus*)

Lord, remember all the good Word You have spoken unto me!
For I ever hope in You, Lord as I serve You joyfully.

This my comfort in affliction, this my comfort in all strife:
that Your Word is my redemption, giving me eternal life!

Though the proud deride and taunt me, I will trust Your faithful Word.
Let Your judgments from of old be all my comfort, holy Lord.

Indignation grips me, Savior, for those who forsake Your Word.
All Your statutes, all Your favor, I will sing with joy, O Lord!

7 The Comfort of Remembering

Pray Psalm 119.49, 50.

Remember the word to Your servant,
Upon which You have caused me to hope.
This *is* my comfort in my affliction,
For Your word has given me life.

Sing Psalm 119.49, 50.

(Wycliff: *All for Jesus*)

Lord, remember all the good Word You have spoken unto me!
For I ever hope in You, Lord as I serve You joyfully.

This my comfort in affliction, this my comfort in all strife:
that Your Word is my redemption, giving me eternal life!

Read Psalm 119.49-56; meditate on verses 119.49, 50, 52.

Preparation

1. What brought the psalmist comfort in affliction?

2. On what did he hope?

Meditation

This passage points to one of God's great promises: Rest (comfort, salvation) is found in work. Not *by* work, but *in* work. Put in New Testament terms, salvation comes by the work of God, but the blessings of it come as we work at it day by day.

Both God and the psalmist are referred to as "remembering" the Word of God. As we have seen, this means continuous attention to details and diligent work of fulfilling – on God's part – and of obeying – on ours. God has work to do in remembering His Word, and His work of remembering is designed for our rest and comfort. We comfort ourselves and experience God's rest as we do the work of remembering His Law in all its aspects. The more we work at learning and obeying God's Law, the more we realize that God is at work fulfilling His promise to bless us with rest; and thus, the more we are comforted and find the rest God promises to all who have entered His covenant (Heb. 4.1-9).

"This has become mine," the psalmist wrote (v. 56), referring to his delight in God's statutes. That delight – that rest – came to him throughout his daily journey as he remembered God's Name and kept His Law (v. 55). Rest and work. Rest in the work of Jesus; work for the greater rest of His great salvation (Phil. 2.13). The harder we work at our salvation, the more of His rest we will know.

God is remembering to comfort us. We must remember as well, and thus we shall know His rest.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

We all like to remember love shown to us from others. These are memories we cherish, and then can bring up and think about any time we choose. They are there as keepsakes in our mind to ponder at will.

God has shown His love by saving us, keeping us, singing with us, and remembering all His promises to us. He is faithful and trustworthy and good. And He has logged all His love in a book for us to read and cherish and consume. "Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts" (Jer. 15.16).

I like the way Mary did this. She listened, she watched, and she remembered. “But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.” “...but Mary His mother kept all these things in her heart” (Lk. 2.19, 51). We are free to do that as well. Ponder every Word about Jesus. Keep Him in our heart.

The Bible has much to say about how and why we should remember our God:

“Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but

we will remember the name of the LORD our God” (Ps. 20.7). For comfort.

“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. 63.6, 7). For comfort.

“Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead...” (2 Tim. 2.8). For comfort and salvation.

The prophet Jeremiah pleads with God to remember him, and then he does some remembering of his own:

“Remember my affliction and roaming, the wormwood and the gall.

My soul still remembers and sinks within me.

This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope.

Through the LORD’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.

They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness” (Lam. 3.19-23).

Blessed. But there is a catch. “Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse; the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today; to go after other gods which you have not known” (Deut. 11.26-28).

Then this very good news: “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, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love...” (Eph. 1.3, 4).

This is a lot to ponder. But truly, there is comfort in remembering.

For reflection

1. What does it mean to “remember” God and His Word?
2. Why is remembering like this such a source of comfort and rest?
3. What can you do to help your fellow believers remember the Lord more frequently and consistently?

He that by his Spirit works faith in us, will work for us. The word of God speaks comfort in affliction. If, through grace, it makes us holy, there is enough in it to make us easy, in all conditions. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Psalm 119.49-56

Pray Psalm 119.51-56

Rest in the Lord’s remembering grace today. Know the comfort of His Presence and love. Meditate on His Word, judgments, precepts, and Law. Give Him abundant thanks and praise.

Sing Psalm 119.51-56.

(Wycliff: *All for Jesus*)

Though the proud deride and taunt me, I will trust Your faithful Word.

Let Your judgments from of old be all my comfort, holy Lord.

Indignation grips me, Savior, for those who forsake Your Word.

Psalm 119:49-56

All Your statutes, all Your favor, I will sing with joy, O Lord!

In the night Your Name attends me, and I keep Your holy Word;
let Your precepts all befriend me, as I keep them, glorious Lord.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. The verb “remember” occurs three times in this stanza. What is its meaning? How should you practice such “remembering”? How does God?
2. The “comfort” shows up twice and is implied in the last two verses. Of what kind of comfort is the psalmist thinking? How can we know that comfort?
3. This passage speaks of “hope” (v. 49) and “indignation”. How would you explain each of these? What is the role of each in the life of faith?
4. How does the psalmist express his delight in God’s Law and Word? Would you say that you share his delight? Explain.
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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