

PSALM 119.73-80

psalm
God's Word 119

T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

Psalm 119.73-80

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Introduction to Psalm 119.73-80

The ' *yod*, as in “jot or tittle”) stanza continues the theme of affliction elaborated in verses 65-72. At the same time, the psalmist declares more firmly than before his conviction about the truth and reliability of God’s Law, as well as his desire to learn and exemplify it.

His afflictions seem to help the psalmist in realizing the truth and reliability of God’s Law. He knows the Word is reliable, and he enjoys the company of those who, like himself, fear God and love His Law.

That’s a good place to be.

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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 Made to Learn

Pray Psalm 119.73.

Your hands have made me and fashioned me;
Give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments.

Sing Psalm 119.73, 74.

(Brother James' Air: [*The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want*](#))

Your hands have made and fashioned me, teach me Your Law, O Lord!
All those who fear You, when they see me will obey Your Word.
Full gladly they will hope like me, as I hope in Your Word.

Read Psalm 119.73-80; meditate on verse 73.

Preparation

1. How did the psalmist come to be?
2. To what end did he exist?

Meditation

The ' (*yod*, as in “jot or tittle”) stanza continues the theme of affliction elaborated in verses 65-72. At the same time, the psalmist declares more firmly than before his conviction about the truth and reliability of God's Law, as well as his desire to learn and exemplify it.

We are made for the Law of God – to love God and our neighbors. We note the sense of personal attention with which the psalmist expressed his having been created by God. His “hands” “made” and “fashioned” the psalmist. God is intimately and personally involved in the creation of every human being, commanding us into being in our mother's womb and endowing us with that combination of DNA and soul that can shape our lives for Him (Ps. 139.13-16). Each of us is unique. We share many features with all human beings; but God has uniquely formed us so that, as we obey His Law, we glorify Him in the specific ways for which He made us.

But since we cannot obey His commandments on our own, God has given His own Son to fulfill all righteousness for us and His own Spirit to teach and empower us. Faith in Jesus Christ and submission to God's Spirit are essential for us to fulfill His purpose for us. Looking to Jesus and listening to God's Spirit, we are empowered to understand and learn His will (Ezek. 36.26, 27; Phil. 2.13).

“Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find repose in Thee” (Augustine). We are made to learn God's holy and righteous and good Law. This is our life (Lev. 18.4, 5; Eph. 2.10); this is where we find our greatest happiness (Ps. 119.1-8), and where we make our unique contribution to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10.31).

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.16.

Maybe it is time for a paradigm shift in our thinking? I'm talking about the idea that our lives look like the back of a needlepoint work, but someday, ah someday, we will see our lives as the front of the needlepoint work (i.e., not a scraggly hot mess).

I think perhaps God wants us to see the process of our lives as a beautiful thing. Right from the start. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5.17).

“Your hands have made me and fashioned me...” (Ps. 119.73)

And if God is good and does good, then we are “His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works...” (Eph. 2.10). Or written as the psalmist said, “that I may learn Your commandments” (Ps. 119.73).

“Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them” (Ps. 139.16).

Truly, this all sounds far more fantastic than we could ever imagine. Created by God? All our days planned for us by Him? Before we were ever born? Yes. Yes. And yes.

“The LORD looks from heaven; He sees...He looks on all the inhabitants of the earth; He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works” (Ps. 33.13-15).

This God, our God, has taken the time and made the effort to pay attention to each one of us. To make and fashion us for the very purpose of loving Him, serving Him; and loving and serving others in His creation.

In and through Jesus, all things were made and without Him nothing was made that was made. “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men” (Jn. 1.3, 4).

So, “though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me; You will stretch out Your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and Your right hand will save me. The LORD will perfect that which concerns me; Your mercy, O LORD, endures forever; do not forsake the works of Your hands” (Ps. 138.7, 8).

We are His, now, created by Him. We are a new creation. Now.

“He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in [our] hearts...” (Eccl. 3.11).

Let’s make the paradigm shift and see ourselves as He sees us. Ready for service. Cleansed. Beautiful.

For reflection

1. God made you. God sees you. God knows you. God loves you. With whom can you share this Good News today?
2. Why is knowing Jesus essential for learning and keeping God’s Law?
3. Why is learning and keeping God’s Law indispensable for following Jesus?

As we are the creatures and the workmanship of God, and as he has not only bestowed upon us vital motion, in common with the lower animals, but has, in addition thereto, given us the light of understanding and reasons — this encourages us to pray that he would direct us to the obedience of his law. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Psalm 119.73

Pray Psalm 119.79, 80.

What believers will you encourage today by your walk with and work for the Lord? Pray for them now, and ask God for mercy and grace to help you encourage them in Him.

Sing Psalm 119.79, 80.

(Brother James’ Air: [*The Lord’s My Shepherd, I’ll Not Want*](#))

Let those who fear You turn to me, all those who love Your Word.

Let my heart pure and blameless be before Your statutes, Lord!

That shame may not attach to me, I hold fast to Your Word!

2 Fear the Lord

Pray Psalm 119.74, 79.

Those who fear You will be glad when they see me,
Because I have hoped in Your word...
Let those who fear You turn to me,
Those who know Your testimonies.

Sing Psalm 119.73, 74, 79, 80.

(Brother James' Air: [*The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want*](#))

Your hands have made and fashioned me, teach me Your Law, O Lord!
All those who fear You, when they see me will obey Your Word.
Full gladly they will hope like me, as I hope in Your Word.

Let those who fear You turn to me, all those who love Your Word.
Let my heart pure and blameless be before Your statutes, Lord!
That shame may not attach to me, I hold fast to Your Word!

Read Psalm 119.73-80; meditate on verses 74, 79.

Preparation

1. What do these two verses have in common?
2. Who are those who fear the Lord?

Meditation

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Ps. 111.10). The fervent, faithful desire of every believer is that all the components of the soul – heart, mind, and conscience – might be held together and strengthened by the fear of the Lord (Ps. 86.11). Like souls attract one another and are thus reinforced in their fear of and love for the Lord. This is what the psalmist is seeking here.

The psalmist has struggled with sin (lying, covetousness, vv. 29, 37) and affliction (slander, libel, v. 69), which God has used to bring him back to the pathway of His Law (v. 67). Now the psalmist is confident that he is where he should be. He's not asking God to take away his lying or shield his eyes from looking at wrong things. He's beyond that. He has returned to the fear of God, and all his soul is coming together to hope in the Word of God (v. 74) and to know, love, and serve Him.

So he wants those who fear God to see him, to be glad in his company (v. 74; cf. v. 63) and to confirm their commitment to God's Law (v. 79). We need the fellowship of like-minded believers to strengthen one another for faith and obedience (cf. 1 Thess. 5.11). But let each be sure to be firmly grounded in the fear of the Lord, for only the fear of God unites the soul in service to Him and turns it to the Word and testimonies of God.

Fear God. Know His Word. Seek like-minded companions. Rejoice and grow together in His Word.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

If like-minded companions in the Lord are good; then the converse is also true and is not good.

Paul warns us that we are not to deceive ourselves: "Evil company corrupts good habits". Or as the NIV phrases 1 Corinthians 15.33, "Bad company corrupts good character."
"Do not be envious of evil men, nor desire to be with them..." (Prov. 24.1).

“Do not let your heart envy sinners, but be zealous for the fear of the LORD all the day; for surely there is a hereafter, and your hope will not be cut off” (Prov. 23.17, 18).

We must always be mindful of who we spend our time with, and how we spend our time. Are we filling our lives with good things or with bad? It makes a difference in the outcome of our lives.

Solomon has some wonderful words of encouragement about good fellowship in the fear of the Lord:

“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor.

For if they fall, one will lift up his companion.

But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up.

Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; for how can one be warm alone?

Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him.

And a threefold cord is not quickly broken” (Eccl. 4.9-12).

“As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend” (Prov. 27.17).

Let us, with our friends who love and fear the Lord, say with the psalmist David:

“I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; the humble shall hear of it and be glad.

Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together” (Ps. 34.1-3).

Fear Him. Hope in His Word (Ps. 119.74).

Fear Him. Know His testimonies (Ps. 119.79).

The people in your Personal Mission Field will be glad and will turn to you (Ps. 119. 74, 79).

For reflection

1. Why do we need faithful friends to help us in our walk with the Lord?
2. How can spending time with friends who fear the Lord help you to grow in obedience?
3. Whom can you encourage in the Lord today? With whom can you share what you are learning about fearing God and keeping His commandments?

... let us learn from the two marks, by which he distinguishes true believers, what is the nature of genuine godliness. He puts the fear, or the reverence of God, in the first place; but he immediately joins to it the knowledge of Divine truth, to teach us that these two things are inseparably connected. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Psalm 119.79

Pray Psalm 119.77, 78.

Call on the Lord for mercy and grace in all your time of need – which is all the time of your life. Meditate on God’s Word. Ask Him to give you a Scripture to carry with you throughout the day.

Sing Psalm 119.77, 78.

(Brother James’ Air: [*The Lord’s My Shepherd, I’ll Not Want*](#))

Your tender mercies come to me that I may live in You.

Your Law I ponder joyfully, Your will to know and do.

Shame all who treat me wrongfully; Your precepts I pursue.

3 Ya Know?

Pray Psalm 119.75.

I know, O LORD, that Your judgments *are* right,
And *that* in faithfulness You have afflicted me.

Sing Psalm 119.75, 76.

(Brother James' Air: [The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want](#))

Your judgments all are right, I know; You judge me faithfully.
Let kindness be my comfort so Your mercy I may see.
Your grace Your faithful servant show, as You have promised me.

Read Psalm 119.73-80; meditate on verse 75.

Preparation

1. What did the psalmist claim to know?
2. Why did God “afflict” him?

Meditation

In our day, as many have noted, language is being subjected to a certain abasement. A kind of Gresham's Law of language is at work, by which sloppy or improper use of words and language is replacing careful and precise use. In the Church, for example, we bandy about certain evangelical terms – disciple, praise, glory, Kingdom, faith, good works, and so forth – as though we really understand what they mean. But our careless overuse of these words has emptied them of all meaning save that which we as individuals recognize.

The same has happened in a broader sense with the word, “know”. These days, “know” refers to a kind of tenuous intellectual state, a possessing of certain knowledge about a situation or thing. We also use it in everyday conversation to make sure people are understanding what we say: “Ya know?” Knowing something has, in many ways, been emptied of all objective reality and made a purely subjective disposition, and the effect of this has been to cast doubt on the ability to know anything really.

But the psalmist insisted, “I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are right” (that is, righteous). What did he mean? In Biblical terms, to know something is not only to acquire it as a bit of information but to prove it in everyday practice. The psalmist *knew* the judgments of God because he read and meditated on them, to hide them in his heart (vv. 9-11). He *knew* them to be righteous because they exposed his own sin and showed him the path he must walk in life (vv. 59, 60). And he *knew* the judgments of God because they proved righteous in his daily experience.

Thus, God acts in faithfulness – or truthfulness, perhaps – to Himself when He afflicts us for straying from His righteous path (Heb. 12.3-11). God's faithfulness to His Word helps us to prove its power for righteousness as we confess our sin, repent and return to the Lord, and walk the path of righteousness marked out in His Law.

We know the Law when we understand and embrace it (mind, heart), set it as the standard for our decisions and actions (conscience), and live it out faithfully in all our words and deeds (vv. 55, 56).

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

The psalmist knew that God was right about everything. God's judgments were right. Always. God is good. Always. And God afflicts us, to teach us, to guide us; and so that we will learn His Word.

The psalmist has already told us that “before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep” God's Word. (Ps.

119.67) Then he told us, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn” God’s statutes. (Ps. 119.71) And now he is saying, “I know that” God’s judgments are right, and “that in faithfulness” He has afflicted me. (Ps. 119.75)

He knew. He believed. He trusted. He learned.

Job knew something that enabled him to survive and thrive during his afflictions: “I know that my Redeemer lives...” (Job 19.25).

Paul knew something that helped him through his sufferings: “I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day” (2 Tim. 1.12).

And here is something that we know because Christ dwells in our hearts through faith; and we are rooted and grounded in love, so that we are 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 [we] may be filled with all the fullness of God” (Eph. 3.17-19). And this knowledge carries us through the afflictions that we face.

And here are some other things that we know:

“Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments” (1 Jn. 2.3).

“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 Jn. 3.16).

“Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us” 1 Jn. 3.24).

“We know that we are of God...and we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life” (1 Jn. 5.19, 20).

He chastens us “for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness” (Heb. 12.10). Ya know? Amazing.

For reflection

1. What does it mean to say that you “know” God’s Word?
2. How would you counsel a new believer to work at “knowing” God’s Word?
3. Whom will you encourage today to press on in the knowledge of the Lord and His Word?

The knowledge of which the prophet speaks, is a sure evidence of his having made a strict and earnest examination of himself; for, had he not well weighed his own guilt, he could not by assured experience have learned the righteousness of God in his afflictions.
John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Psalm 119.75*

Pray Psalm 119.77, 78.

Call on the Lord to help you know and experience more of the righteousness of His Word today as you make the most of your time and work your Personal Mission Field unto the Lord.

Sing Psalm 119.77, 78.

(Brother James’ Air: [*The Lord’s My Shepherd, I’ll Not Want*](#))

Your tender mercies come to me that I may live in You.
Your Law I ponder joyfully, Your will to know and do.
Shame all who treat me wrongfully; Your precepts I pursue.

4 Merciful Kindness

Pray Psalm 119.75-78

I know, O LORD, that Your judgments *are* right,
And *that* in faithfulness You have afflicted me.
Let, I pray, Your merciful kindness be for my comfort,
According to Your word to Your servant.
Let Your tender mercies come to me, that I may live;
For Your law is my delight.
Let the proud be ashamed,
For they treated me wrongfully with falsehood;
But I will meditate on Your precepts.

Sing Psalm 119.75-78.

(Brother James' Air: [*The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want*](#))

Your judgments all are right, I know; You judge me faithfully.
Let kindness be my comfort so Your mercy I may see.
Your grace Your faithful servant show, as You have promised me.

Your tender mercies come to me that I may live in You.
Your Law I ponder joyfully, Your will to know and do.
Shame all who treat me wrongfully; Your precepts I pursue.

Read Psalm 119.73-80; meditate on verses 76, 77.

Preparation

1. What was the psalmist seeking from the Lord?

2. Why did he want this?

Meditation

The writer of Hebrews exhorts us to seek the Lord in prayer in all our times of need, that we may find in Him mercy and grace to carry us through (Heb. 4.16). This looks like what our psalmist was doing in verses 76 and 77. He called on God to let His “tender mercies” come to him and His “merciful kindness” to be a comfort to him. In these two verses the psalmist paralleled “lovingkindness” (v. 76) and “mercies” (v. 77). Whatever mercy is, therefore, it expresses God’s love for us – His grace. Mercy and grace thus seem like two sides of the same coin. We need them both, as the writer of Hebrews insisted, and each is grounded in our confidence in the Word of God (“According to Your word...”, “Your Law *is* my delight.”).

But what’s the difference? And when are our times of need?

A simple way to differentiate mercy from grace is to see grace as receiving what you *don't* deserve. None of us deserves the lovingkindness of the Lord, and yet He stands ready to shower, surround, and sustain us by His grace all the livelong day. He’s just waiting for us to realize our need for grace and come to Him seeking it.

But we must seek mercy as well. If grace is getting what we don’t deserve, mercy is *not* getting what we *do* deserve. From God we deserve only wrath and condemnation. But in Jesus Christ there is no condemnation, for He has borne our sins away and opened the way to God the Father by His own righteousness (Rom. 8.1). We need the mercy of God as a reminder of the work of Jesus on our behalf. And we need the grace of God to strengthen us for all our times of need.

And when are those? *All* our time. Period. We could neither see nor hear nor breathe nor do anything else

were it not for the grace of God. Give thanks and praise for God's grace, and urge everyone you know to do so as well. This, after all, is the goal of grace, and a sure sign that we have received it (cf. 2 Cor. 4.15).

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

The people in our Personal Mission Field are longing for mercy and grace from the Lord. And they also need to see mercy and grace from us.

If grace is receiving what we don't deserve, and mercy is not getting what we do deserve, then we can fulfill both of those things for others by simply loving them. It is what God did for us. He demonstrated His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, He sent Jesus Christ to die for us (Rom. 5.8). "Having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom. 5.9). What we don't and do deserve summed up for us.

There was a man in the Old Testament who had the name of Jabez because his mom said, "I bore him in pain" (1 Chron. 4.9). Not really an auspicious beginning. But Jabez took his painful name to heart, and he called out to God and said, "'Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!' So God granted him what he requested" (1 Chron. 4.10).

Here was a man who was asking God for His "merciful kindness" and for His "tender mercies" so that he would not do evil and would not cause others any pain. He must have prayed according to God's Word and delighted in God's Law because God saw fit to answer him in his time of need. Which is always. We are thankful to read about a person who trusted God and looked to Him for mercy and grace.

We are the recipients of God's mercy and grace. We are now called to disperse the same:

"But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3.4-7).

And why did God pour out this abundant grace and mercy upon us? "...that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men" (Titus 3.8).

Our Personal Mission Field thus becomes blessed and enlarged territory, full of God's mercy and grace because we are not being evil-doers and not causing others pain; and we are actively showing love (1 Chron. 4.10).

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. As it is written: 'He has dispersed abroad...'" (2 Cor. 9.8, 9)

Merciful kindness and grace. Always.

For reflection

1. In what sense are mercy and grace "two sides of the same coin"?
2. When are you especially aware of the need for God's mercy? When are you especially aware of the need for His grace?
3. How does God intend to extend His grace and mercy to others through you today?

He implores God's mercy, as what was essentially necessary to relieve and cure his miseries. He thus shows that nothing can remove sorrow from the faithful, until they feel that God is reconciled to them. In the Word in which God offers his mercy, there is

Psalm 119.73-80

to be found no small comfort for healing all the grief to which men are liable. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Psalm 119.76*

Pray Psalm 119.73, 74.

Whom do you expect to see or talk with today who is a fellow believer? How will you encourage them? What can you say or do to help them desire more the Lord and His Word?

Sing Psalm 119.73, 74.

(Brother James' Air: [*The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want*](#))

Your hands have made and fashioned me, teach me Your Law, O Lord!

All those who fear You, when they see me will obey Your Word.

Full gladly they will hope like me, as I hope in Your Word.

5 Flood of Lies

Pray Psalm 119.78.

Let the proud be ashamed,
For they treated me wrongfully with falsehood;
But I will meditate on Your precepts.

Sing Psalm 119.77-80.

(Brother James' Air: *The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want*)

Let those who fear You turn to me, all those who love Your Word.
Let my heart pure and blameless be before Your statutes, Lord!
That shame may not attach to me, I hold fast to Your Word!

Read Psalm 119.73-80; meditate on verse 78.

Preparation

1. How were others treating the psalmist?
2. What did he do in response?

Meditation

Falsehood comes in various forms. Deception, misinformation, flattery, half-truths, bias, prejudice, lies. All falsehoods derive from the one basic lie Paul describes in Romans 1.18-32, the lie of turning away from God and His revelation to worship and serve other things, ideas, values, or visions. Those who embrace the lie must compound and propagate it to justify their commitment to it. Which makes for a veritable flood of lies throughout our society.

The problem with falsehood is its ubiquity. It's not like the 17-year locusts, or even a national holiday that comes 'round once a year. Falsehood is the information air we breathe! It is the devil's flood intended to drown out the message of truth from the people of God (Rev. 12.13-17). We can't fight lies with lies. We can only protect ourselves against falsehood and our Personal Mission Field from the landmines of lies by continuous resort to the Word of God, beginning in His Law.

And the psalmist understood the importance of *meditating* on the precepts of God. In meditation we exercise our minds by comparisons ("God's precepts are like..."), images or situations (Solomon judging between the two women), consideration of synonyms ("think about", "turn around in my mind", "chew on"), and plain talk ("OK, here's what 'God's precepts' are, and how they apply to me"). The more we do this, the more we will train our soul to understand, desire, and choose the precepts of God whenever falsehood is seeking to penetrate our soul.

Don't try to walk through the flood of lies. Rise above it on the truth of God's Word.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

We remember that in Psalm 119.70 we were given permission to call the proud "greasy-hearted". Well, here we are given the same freedom to pray that the proud liars in our lives "be ashamed" (Ps. 119.78).

But because we have the warning from God: "Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; lest the LORD see it, and it displease Him, and He turn away His wrath from him" (Prov. 24.17, 18); we must be careful, always, about how we deal with those who are our foes. Even if it is just in our minds.

And we have this warning/promise from God, as well: "If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if

he is thirsty, give him water to drink; for so you will heap coals of fire on his head, and the LORD will reward you” (Prov. 25.21, 22).

Truly, “falsehood is the information air we breathe.” Whether they are lies told about us personally or lies that we know are told to our loved ones or lies that are pervasive in the world in which we live, lies are everywhere. And happily, we know who is telling them. Whether he uses the mouths of others, or he inflicts the lies directly into the hearts of the unaware, it is our enemy, the father of lies, who is behind it all. Jesus said, “He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it” (Jn. 8.44).

No falsehood is ever from God. “For God is not the author of confusion but of peace...” (1 Cor. 14.33). In fact, “God...cannot lie” (Titus 1.2).

Paul wrote us wise words about how to counteract the air of lies that surround us: “Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things” (Phil. 4.8).

So, “I will meditate on Your precepts” (Ps. 119.78). And on Jesus Who is the truth (Jn. 14.6).

For reflection

1. What is the antidote to the lies that are everywhere present in our world? Explain.
2. What can you do to prepare yourself each day to recognize and resist the lies and falsehoods that will come at you?
3. Whom will you encourage today to stand firm in the truth of God’s Word?

... whenever we are wrongfully persecuted by wicked men, we are invited to have recourse directly to God for protection. At the same time, we are taught that we have no reason to be abashed at their insolence; for, whatever power they may arrogate to themselves, He will beat down their loftiness, and lay it low, to their shame... John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Psalm 119.78*

Pray Psalm 119.75-77.

Confess your confidence in the Law of God and all His Word. Give thanks to God for His Word. Pray for mercy and grace for each of your day’s activities, and the Word of God to light your path.

Sing Psalm 119.75-77.

(Brother James’ Air: [*The Lord’s My Shepherd, I’ll Not Want*](#))

Your judgments all are right, I know; You judge me faithfully.

Let kindness be my comfort so Your mercy I may see.

Your grace Your faithful servant show, as You have promised me.

6 A Blameless Heart

Pray Psalm 119.80.

Let my heart be blameless regarding Your statutes,
That I may not be ashamed.

Sing Psalm 119.79, 80.

(Brother James' Air: *The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want*)

Let those who fear You turn to me, all those who love Your Word.
Let my heart pure and blameless be before Your statutes, Lord!
That shame may not attach to me, I hold fast to Your Word!

Read Psalm 119.73-80; meditate on verse 80.

Preparation

1. With respect to what did the psalmist want a blameless heart?
2. Why did he want that?

Meditation

This is one of many psalms that reminds us that the heart is the heart of the matter when it comes to God and His Word. Consider a few: “My defense is of God, Who saves the upright in heart” (Ps. 7.10). “But I have trusted in Your mercy; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation” (Ps. 13.5). “You have tested my heart...” (Ps. 17.3). “Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my mind and heart” (Ps. 26.2). “I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your Law is within my heart” (Ps. 40.8). “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (Ps. 51.10). “My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast” (Ps. 57.7). “So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom” (Ps. 90.12).

And so on.

A “blameless” heart is really a “complete” heart (Hebrew, **תָּמִים**, *taMIM*). It lacks nothing it requires to be complete before the Lord. Thus when such a heart is exposed to the Law of God, it is not ashamed. Imagine your heart standing for inspection by the Lord, like a Marine standing before His commanding officer. He’s looking at every crease and fold, pocket, collar, belt – the whole works. Everything is just what it’s supposed to be according to the manual. Complete.

Our psalmist knew what it was to stray from God, to give in to the temptation to covet and stretch the truth. But what he *wanted*, what he *desired*, what he *truly and earnestly longed for* was that none of that nor anything like it would find a home in his heart. He wanted God to give him a *blameless and complete* heart, all his desires and longings, his delights and joys, his motives and aspirations fixed on being complete before the Lord.

“For in [Jesus Christ] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, Who is the head of all principality and power” (Col. 1.9, 10). And He makes us complete in heart before the Law of God – no shame, no condemnation (Rom. 8.1).

Make sure your heart is set on Jesus. He’ll do the rest.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

God appreciates a person’s heart who is trying to please Him. It does not escape His perusal. Think of the occasion when Solomon could have asked for anything from God, and he asked for wisdom: “Then God said to Solomon: ‘Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of

your enemies, nor have you asked long life—but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king—wisdom and knowledge are granted to you...” (2 Chron. 1.7-12).

We also have the example of King David, who longed to build a temple for the LORD but was denied the privilege. However, God knew his heart and said to him, “Whereas it was in your heart to build a temple for My name, you did well in that it was in your heart” (2 Chron. 6.7, 8).

We learn from Psalm 24.3, 4 about what kind of heart is pleasing to the LORD in worship: “Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.”

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When our heart is pleasing to God, because we are trusting and obeying Him, we have no reason to be ashamed. As David said, “To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in You; let me not be ashamed; let not my enemies triumph over me. Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed; let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause” (Ps. 25.1-3).

And what does our loving Savior Jesus Christ want for our hearts? He said, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me” (Jn. 14.1).

He wants us to rest secure in His blameless life, and claim the forgiveness and wholeness that we find in Him to aid and assist us in keeping God’s Laws and to resist our enemy’s attempts to make us feel shame. When God looks into our heart, we want Him to see Jesus. First and foremost.

Jesus said to us, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11.28).

A blameless heart, in God’s Law, through Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Shame-free.

For reflection

1. Why does the heart – the seat of all our affections – matter so much in the life of faith?
2. What kinds of things can distract our heart from loving God supremely?
3. How can believers encourage one another to be firm-hearted for God, so that they will not be ashamed to look into His Word at any point?

Soundness of heart signifies sincerity in dependence on God, and devotedness to him. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Psalm 119.80

Pray Psalm 119.75-78.

Ask the Lord to search your heart, and to give you mercy and grace to serve Him with a blameless heart this day.

Sing Psalm 119.75-78.

(Brother James’ Air: [*The Lord’s My Shepherd, I’ll Not Want*](#))

Your judgments all are right, I know; You judge me faithfully.

Let kindness be my comfort so Your mercy I may see.

Your grace Your faithful servant show, as You have promised me.

Psalm 119.73-80

Your tender mercies come to me that I may live in You.
Your Law I ponder joyfully, Your will to know and do.
Shame all who treat me wrongfully; Your precepts I pursue.

7 A Few Important Verbs

Pray Psalm 119.75-77.

I know, O LORD, that Your judgments *are* right,
And *that* in faithfulness You have afflicted me.
Let, I pray, Your merciful kindness be for my comfort,
According to Your word to Your servant.
Let Your tender mercies come to me, that I may live;
For Your law *is* my delight.

Sing Psalm 119.75-78.

(Brother James' Air: [The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want](#))

Your judgments all are right, I know; You judge me faithfully.
Let kindness be my comfort so Your mercy I may see.
Your grace Your faithful servant show, as You have promised me.

Your tender mercies come to me that I may live in You.
Your Law I ponder joyfully, Your will to know and do.
Shame all who treat me wrongfully; Your precepts I pursue.

Read Psalm 119.73-80; meditate on verse 75.

Preparation

1. What two things did the psalmist know?
2. What did this tell him about God?

Meditation

What stands out to me in this *yod* stanza are the verbs the psalmist uses to describe his commitment to the Word of God: learn, hope, know, delight (in a noun form), fear, and meditate. These are all related to the psalmist's approach to God's Law and his approach to his life (cf. vv. 75, 77, 80). The strongest verb in this stanza is "know", יָדָעַתִּי, *ya-da-TEE*). Knowing something with confidence is the fruit of these other verbs, and it gives rise to consistency in living for the Lord.

Note how this verb is pointed both at the "judgments" of God – His Law and all His Word – as well as at the psalmist himself ("I know...*that* in faithfulness You have afflicted me"). In his *Institutes*, John Calvin makes the point that knowledge of God and knowledge of man are never very far apart. This is what we see in verse 75, where the psalmist declares he has come to know God both in His Word and in His dealings.

We only really know ourselves and our world when we see them in the light of God's Word, and as we bring our lives into line with His teaching. Such knowing derives from and involves all the other verbs in this stanza. By seeking the Lord in meditation and delighting to learn of Him, we increase in hope and the fear of the Lord, which leads to knowledge (Prov. 1.7). In the knowledge of the Lord we live without shame, for we delight in Him and His way, and we are companions with others who share the knowledge and fear of the Lord.

It's appropriate that, here, near the middle of this psalm, the psalmist reaches back to the use of these and similar verbs in previous stanzas and points forward to their further elaboration in stanzas to come. He's reminding us of what it means to know the Lord and what we must do to arrive at that state.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

We have no problem singing with gusto about God's faithfulness to us:

*Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father, there is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not; as Thou has been Thou forever wilt be.*
(Chisholm/Runyon, 1923).

But can we sing with the same enthusiasm about His faithfulness in judgments, and His afflicting us because of what He finds?

I'm sure we should, because as we know, He chastens those whom He loves (Heb. 12.6). And His faithfulness knows no bounds.

“Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments...” (Deut. 7.9)

Our God, “...the Holy One who is faithful” (Hos. 11.12).

“God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1.9).

“He who calls you is faithful...” (1 Thess. 5.24).

His faithfulness goes beyond human reasoning or understanding. When He looks and sees that we need to be chastened for our sins, He provides the way to forgiveness for us. He gave us Jesus, as the Perfect-Keeper of the Law, to pay the price for our sins. Then He is faithful to forgive us when we confess our sins to Him (1 Jn. 1.9).

The psalmist knew, and I know, that His judgments are right and that in His faithful loving faithfulness, He has seen fit to afflict me for my own good.

The writer of the book of Hebrews has shared a helpful way for us to think about this truth. He said, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” And then he pushes the point out beyond us to our Personal Mission Field: “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works...” (Heb. 10.23, 24).

All that happens in, to, and through us, has a point. In God's economy nothing is ever wasted. We know that we sin. We find this out daily as we meditate in God's Law. God is faithful to afflict us and to move us forward, to give us hope, that we can delight to be more like Jesus. And who benefits from all these verbs—learn, hope, know, delight, fear, and meditate? We do. Others do. For in all this we are living out the Law. (Matt. 22.37-40).

All of God's faithfulness is good. Even the kind that doesn't have a hymn to immortalize it.

For reflection

1. Why is it a good thing that God is faithful to His Word? What are the implications of His faithfulness for you?

2. What is the relationship between the words “learn”, “know”, and “hope”? How do these apply to our study of God's Word?

3. Whom will you encourage today to know the Lord, learn His Law, meditate in His Word, or hope in faithfulness?

The knowledge of which the prophet speaks, is a sure evidence of his having made a strict and earnest examination of himself; for, had he not well weighed his own guilt, he could not by assured experience have learned the righteousness of God in his afflictions.
John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Psalm 119.75*

Psalm 119.73-80

Pray Psalm 119.73, 74, 79, 80.

Ask the Lord to let You know His Presence throughout this day, to know the path He would have you walk, and to know in your heart that loving and serving Him is the source of great joy. Whom will you encourage today in the knowledge of the Lord and His Word?

Sing Psalm 119.73, 74, 79, 80.

(Brother James' Air: [*The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want*](#))

Your hands have made and fashioned me, teach me Your Law, O Lord!
All those who fear You, when they see me will obey Your Word.
Full gladly they will hope like me, as I hope in Your Word.

Let those who fear You turn to me, all those who love Your Word.
Let my heart pure and blameless be before Your statutes, Lord!
That shame may not attach to me, I hold fast to Your Word!

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. What does it mean to truly know God?
2. How do the other verbs in this stanza contribute to our growing in the knowledge of God?
3. Knowing God and His Word doesn't lead us to shame. Why not? To what does it lead?
4. The fear of God is the beginning of knowledge. Why is it so important that we have friends who fear the Lord?
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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