

A PSALM OF DEVOTION TO GOD'S WORD (119)

INTRODUCTION: The spirit of the Psalms is a spirit of devotion to God's word.

Matthew Henry said, "There is no one book of scripture that is more helpful to the devotions of the saints than this, and it has been so in all ages of the church."

I. The spirit of the writer of this great Psalm

A. He was conscious of the fact that a godly life was impossible without an understanding of God's will for that life, and the best way to know God's will is to become acquainted with God's Word and think on it continually.

B. He fell desperately in love with God and then just as deeply in love with God's Word and God's will for his life.

C. He was a great poetic artist.

The acrostic arrangement of the Psalm; in 22 sections of 8 verses each; the first letter of the first word in each verse in the first section begin with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, Aleph, etc.

II. The Relation between Law and Spirituality.

A. The many words used for "Law" might seem to indicate a tendency toward Pharisaic legalism, but nowhere does the Psalmist allow Law to interfere between him and God.

Never is a formal observance of external rules substituted for the inward devotion of the heart.

B. The whole Psalm is animated by a profound inwardness and spirituality.

It shows no tendency to substitute mechanical observance of rules for the living application of principles.

C. Devotion must always be under the authority of God's Word;

otherwise we will have fanaticism. But the law of God's Word guards against the excesses of fanaticism.

D. Psalm 119 breathes throughout the spirit of the most intense personal conviction, of the most intimate but deeply reverent communion with God.

III. This devotional spirit is sharply challenged by the prevailing laxity of faith & morals of that day.

The faithful Israelite was challenged to be different. A devoted Christian can expect to be sorely tried,

as the Psalmist was:

A. He had to suffer contempt (22, 39, 42) and even ill treatment (121, 134)

for his adherence to the law.

B. The authorities of the community despised and persecuted him (23, 161)

C. Men of position and power,

whom he designates as "the proud" or "the wicked" mocked him, spread false & harmful statements about him, and endeavored to oppress & injure him

(51, 61, 69, 78, 84, 85, 86, 95, 122, 150, 157)

D. His persecutors were not heathen, but faithless Israelites

1. He describes them as forsaking God's Law, (53)

2. - - - wandering from His commandments (21)

3. - - - Forgetting His words (139)

E. They were selfish, self-satisfied men of the world, incapable of appreciating true religion (70)

F. He was confronted by laxity if not actual apostasy (113, 158, 126)

G. Repeatedly & earnestly he prays for fuller knowledge of the law and for strength to keep it, for relief from persecution, for protection & preservation.

IV. The Devotion of the Psalmist to God's Word.

A. His devotion to God Himself

1. vs 2 "seek him with their whole heart"
2. vs 7 "I will praise thee with an upright heart,
when I learn thy righteous ordinances"

B. His devotion to God's Word

1. vs 6 "having my eyes fixed on all thy commandments"
2. vs 11 "I have laid up thy word in my heart,
that I might not sin against thee"
3. "I DELIGHT in the way of thy testimonies,
vs 14, 16, 24, 35, 47, 77, 92
"which I LOVE", vs 48, 97, 159.

4. "I will MEDITATE on thy precepts,
vs 15, 23, 27, 48, 78, 97, 148

Notice WHEN he MEDITATES on God's Word

- a. "in the night", vs 35
- b. "at midnight" vs 62
- c. "all the day" vs 97
- d. "before dawn" vs 147

- e. "before the watches of the night" vs 148

"Day & night the Psalmist lived with God's word;
it became the very food of his mind.

He majored in God's Word.

How he ever found time to do anything else
is YOUR question.

5. "I will FIX MY EYES on thy ways", vs 15

6. "I will NOT FORGET thy word, vs 16

7. "I will OBSERVE thy word, vs 17

8. "OPEN MY EYES that I may behold wondrous things
out of thy law, vs 18;
"TEACH me thy law, vs 29, 33

9. "My soul is consumed with LONGING for ...
vs. 20, 40, 131, "I cleave to thy testimonies"

10. "Thy testimonies are my COUNSELLORS" vs 24

11. "REVIVE me according to thy word

12. "Make me to UNDERSTAND the way of thy ..."
vs. 27, 32, 34.

13. "STRENGTHEN me according to thy ... vs 28.

14. "OBSERVE IT WITH MY WHOLE HEART" vs 34, 69

15. "I TRUST in thy word" vs 42

16. "My HOPE is in thy ordinances" vs. 43

17. "Thy Word is A LAMP TO MY FEET,
and a LIGHT TO MY PATH" vs 105, 130.

Lincoln & the Bible

Pidgeon Creek Church, near Gentryville, Ind.
backless benches

Hardy, God-fearing pioneers
Sally Bush, with 2 step-children

Sarah & Abraham

Abraham later stirred the nation with his speeches
on slavery & the Union.

Lowell said, "he spoke in the grand simplicities
of the Old & New Testaments."

Where did he get that familiarity?

He got it sitting on a backless bench
listening to a preacher who knew little else
besides the Bible

but who knew his Bible,

and preached its truths

and spoke its language.

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