

**Psalm 119: 81-88; "Revive me according to Your  
Lovingkindness",  
A Communion Sermon delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall, on  
November 4th, 2007, in the Morning Worship Service.**

Once again we return to the Lord's Table to find where the essence of our spiritual and physical strength lies. As Christians we have come to know that we can do nothing which is profitable in the sight of God, without our Lord Jesus Christ. I am not trying to be harsh when I say this. It is only because of Christ that we will be remembered forever. If we do not believe in Jesus Christ we will perish forever. "Without Me you can do nothing," He says. Sometimes we forget this truth. This is why we keep coming back to remember our Lord in this service of remembrance. This truth of remembering where our strength to do anything spiritual lies, is a truth which God has given us to know not only intellectually, but also in more definite and practical ways. The reason for this ought to be obvious but it is not often thought about by God's people as it ought to be. We are to observe the Lord's Supper "until He comes". "As oft as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes." The reason that you and I do this is so that on the last Day, the Day of the Resurrection Judgment, that we who believe in Christ shall have no problem bowing before Him, admiring Him, confessing that He alone is worthy of all of our worship for all of eternity. This is how it will be.

But the Lord Jesus is also our Brother and our Friend in the Christian life, and these verses in Psalm 119 show us that He will lead us and show us just how strong He really is, and how weak and unable we really are to live the Christian life. We need His strength and His help now. We live in a world of sin where men's hearts are darkened and blinded to the truth of Christ's glory. They will resist the truth of God's Word because they want to do what pleases themselves, and they will persecute us if we get in the way of their doing their own pleasure. And the assignment that has been given to all believers is to so live that they "will keep the testimony of God's mouth"; that is, His blessed Word which He has given to guide and direction us through this life on the path of righteousness on to the world of eternal Day. We are not darkened and blinded like unbelievers, but we may find ourselves fainting because of persecution or affliction; wondering when God shall come to our aid; when it is that Christ will come to our rescue. That is what the verses that we are looking at this morning are bringing to our attention. They are not simply for the Old Testament saint who is

fainting looking for God's salvation, for the long-awaited and promised Messiah to come to Israel as a people. That was the true encouragement for the Old Testament saint; that Christ would come, and all the eyes of every spiritually-minded believer were straining forward to see it. They were longing for the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed to them even though they did not know His Name as we do here today. They were still looking for His grace. We have a decided advantage over them in that we now know so much more about His grace; now that He has come. But we still have problems, trials, and afflictions; the same as they did then. And so this ordinance of the Lord's Supper is intended by Christ our Savior to be a means of reviving the fainting spirits of each one who knows Him. It is given to us so that in remembering Him, we who are believers will press on to know Him better and prove to be His faithful servants. These verses show us how you and I should seek Christ's help and grace so that we will endure afflictions and persecutions and become His good and faithful servants. There are 4 ways that believers should seek help from Christ their Savior. Let me list them for you as we begin. The 4 Ways that are listed in our text are hoping, not forgetting, crying, and asking.

**The 1st way is by hoping in God's Word which Christ has become.**

(Verses 81 and 82)

You can see this if you will look with me at verse 81. "My soul faints for Your salvation, but I hope in Your word." "My eyes fail from searching Your word, saying, 'When will you comfort me?'" Hope is something that every Christian has through Jesus Christ. It is also something that he must learn to exercise once he has it. I say this because there are many times in our Christian life when we will have to wait to be comforted. During those times, we hope in God. God is the God of all comfort and the Father of mercies, but our earthly comforts are not constant. Hope is that grace which draws spiritual comfort from the things which God has promised in His Word; that the things that He has promised will most surely come to pass. But we should know that they will not always in the time that we want them to. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous," it says in Psalm 34: 19, "but the Lord delivers him out of them all." Hope for the Christian is the grace that is given to him to desire, to expect, and to wait for the good things that God has promised that he will give, in accordance with His Word. "My soul faints for Your salvation, but I hope in Your Word." The only real hope, the only lasting hope for any person is to trust in God, that He is full of goodness and compassion and that He will forgive all of our sins and iniquities and heal all the spiritual diseases of our hearts and minds. This He does do when we come to Him in faith asking for the free

gift of salvation This is our salvation, our everlasting hope; what Jesus Christ has done for our soul. But then, after our conversion, God's teaching becomes very practical. God brings joy and gladness in our conversion and in learning ways of righteousness and truth in keeping His Word. And then in His great love for us, He wisely ordains trials, difficulties, and afflictions to come to each of His dear people so that their faith will be perfected and their hope in Him will be more constant and continual. The Psalmist here was being persecuted for his faith, and yet he hoped in God's Word. There is the false hope of those who do not believe in Jesus Christ; that all is well with them and that all will turn out well for them in this life, and at the last when they die they hope that they will rest in peace; that there is no hell for those who do not pay attention to God and what He has said in His Word. But Proverbs 11: 7 says, "When a wicked man dies, his expectation will perish, and the hope of the unjust perishes." "The righteous is delivered from trouble, and it comes to the wicked instead." When a person who does not believe in Jesus Christ dies, they are not delivered from trouble. Their trouble is only just beginning and it will continue in endless misery.

Then there is also the false hope of the hypocrite, the one that says that they believe in Jesus, and yet they secretly want to hold on to the lusts of the world and the flesh and enjoy the passing pleasures of sin for a season. The hypocrite somehow deceives himself into thinking that he will be just fine in the end, when he dies. Surely they fool themselves who think so. Turn with me over to Job 8: 11 and listen to Bildad the Shuhite's speech there. "Can the papyrus grow up without a marsh?" "Can the reeds flourish without water?" "While it is yet green and not cut down, it withers before any other plant, so are the paths of all who forget God; and the hope of the hypocrite shall perish, whose confidence shall be cut off, and whose trust is a spider's web." "He leans on his house, but it does not stand." "He holds it fast, but it does not endure." "He grows green in the sun, and his branches spread out in his garden." "His roots wrap around the rock heap, and look for a place in the stones." "If he is destroyed from his place, then it will deny him saying, 'I have not seen you.'" This is a picture of one who thought that he had something that he did not have. Christ has not seen them come to Him for the grace of repentance and the strength to do God's will. It is Christ denying those at the judgment who professed to know Him and yet did not repent. "Then," it says a few verses later in Job 9: 1, "Job answered and said, 'Truly I know it is so....'" But of the one who does repent, Bildad speaks in chapter 8, verse 19 and says, "Behold this is the joy of His way, and out of the earth others will grow." "Behold God will not cast away the blameless, nor will He uphold the evildoers." "He will yet fill your mouth

with laughing, and your lips with rejoicing." "Those who hate you will be clothed with shame, and the dwelling place of the wicked will come to nothing." In other words, the one who does come to repentance will be a convincing testimony to others that they should do the same. There will be great joy and rejoicing, and laughter for the greatness of God's love and mercy will fill our mouths. Do you see from these words the promise of God? "He will not cast away the blameless." "He will not uphold evildoers." "He will yet fill your mouth with laughing." "He will fill your lips with rejoicing." God will do these things for the true Christian. God knows, and our Lord Jesus Christ knows that you cannot come to thorough and real repentance of all known sin and continue to pursue righteousness without grace. He will give that grace as we seek it and work out our salvation with fear and trembling. This is what the Christian's hope is built upon; God's precious Word. Christ has, in the New Covenant, become that Word of hope, that Word of comfort, that strength and source of blessing so that we who are inadequate to meet the challenge of keeping His Word will find Him to be our adequacy. Christ is our Hope. Christ is our comfort. Christ is our strength. Turn to Him today in the words of Psalm 86: 17. "Show me a sign for good, that those who hate me may see it and be ashamed, because You Lord, have helped me and comforted me."

**Then 2ndly- Fainting believers should seek help from Christ their Savior so that they will not forget God's statutes which Christ has fulfilled.**

(Verses 83 and 84)

"For I have become like a wineskin in the smoke, yet I do not forget Your statutes." The picture here is of the bottles of those olden times, which were made of hog skins or goat skins, and one being hung up in a smoky room. It then becomes dry and black and cracked, and is good for nothing, one would think. This is the way that the Psalmist is speaking of himself as he goes through this trial of affliction and persecution. He has not only been hung up to dry, but he is hung up in the smoke, and he feels it greatly in his body as well as his soul. And yet, for all of that, he does not forget the truth of God's written, revealed Word, even though his life is being withered by the trial. This is the way of the true Christian's sanctification. This is the way that he grows in holiness. It is the way that he grows into Christ likeness. Look at Romans 5 with me for a moment. In verse 1 Paul rejoices in our mutual salvation. "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." "And not only that, but we

also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope." "Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." The path of the true Christian is to "glory in tribulations," it says here. It is only Christ's grace in the midst of the tribulation that can cause you to glory. It is your great opportunity to trust in God and hold fast to all that He has commanded you. Tribulation produces perseverance. Perseverance is when we continue to live our lives in accordance with all the truth of the Bible even though we are suffering for that very reason.

What do you do when someone has been persecuting you; speaking evil of you in a way that your life, your witness and the testimony of your life is being destroyed? Your body is being affected by the stress that you are under. You are a wineskin in the smoke. Do you draw near to God at such times, glorying in the fact that you know Him? Do you persevere in keeping His commandments and maintaining by Christ's grace, your faith in Him? It is not easy if the persecution continues on and you do not see the end of it in sight. The Psalmist says, "How many are the days of Your servant?" He is not speaking of the length of his life. He is speaking of the length of the trial that he is going through. The question that comes to mind is; when will God execute judgment on those who persecute me? The great temptation that comes to the Christian is to choose to sin in some way rather than to continue to endure and in the process keep His statutes. It is at this very point that if we will continue to obey God and to follow Christ, where the greatest glory is brought to God for our remembering His statutes. Many commandments may be meditated upon, and when by the grace of Christ we focus on keeping them, we shall find strength. The strength to keep on the path of righteousness and not fall into various sins is all of Christ's grace. The moral and spiritual strength not to complain against God and to think hard thoughts of Him for not freeing us from persecution, affliction, and trial, is all of Christ's grace. The strength not to seek our own revenge, not to return evil for evil; to love our enemies and to pray for those who spitefully use us, is all of Christ's grace.

As we are coming to the Lord's table in a few minutes, let us remember that the Lord Jesus suffered, but He did not forget God's statutes. He kept every one of them while He was being falsely accused and on trial because He was the Son of God. He kept every commandment of God when He was mocked and beaten, when he was spit upon and mistreated. He kept every commandment while He was beaten and scourged and rejected while Barabas the criminal was released. The Lord Jesus did not forget God's

statutes in all of this. And we are told in 1st Peter 4: 1, "Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God." As we come to the Lord's table let us remember that Jesus died, not only to purchase peace and pardon for us, but also that we would be able to remember God's statutes in the midst of our trials and thus glorify him. Listen to Peter again. "But even if you should suffer for righteousness sake, you are blessed." "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed." "For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil." "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." This grace of Christ is sufficient to sustain every fainting saint trying to do the will of God.

**3rdly- The 3rd way that fainting believers can be revived is by crying to God for help remembering that Christ will Himself revive us.**

(Verses 85-87)

The situation that the Psalmist was in, was indeed a very difficult trial. He says, "The proud have dug pits for me, which is not according to Your law." All Your commandments are faithful; they persecute me wrongly; help me!" They almost made an end of me on the earth, but I did not forsake Your precepts." This was how wild beasts were captured in those times. A pit was dug and then the opening concealed with thatch and straw and then the creature would fall into it. This was done to trap a wild beast, but in the law in Exodus 21: 33 it was forbidden to dig pits to deliberately catch a tame beast. "If a man shall open a pit or if a man shall dig a pit and not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls into it, the owner of the pit shall make it good; he shall give money unto the owner thereof, and the dead beast shall be his." The Christian is a tame beast who men ought not to set traps for. The proud ought not to dig pits for him. The meaning of our verse in the Psalm is that wicked men were setting traps for the Psalmist, not only to persecute him, but also to take his life. This is not in accord with God's law. He responds by crying out to God, "Help me!" How good it is to know that when we are in the worst of troubles that short prayers to God will be heard.

What do you do when it becomes apparent that proud men are setting traps for you? You should cry out, "Lord, help me!" Turn with me to Psalm 130. Here we find the Psalmist in the depths of distress. "Out of the depths I have cried to You, O Lord; Lord hear my voice!" "Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications." When we cry to God, finding ourselves in such a state, let us also be those who are willing to look for and to await the answer. Verse 5 says, "I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word I do hope." "My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning--Yes, more than those who watch for the morning." Waiting upon the Lord and waiting for the Lord, is an exercise of faith and hope. He is going to act, He is going to come to deliver and help the one trusting in Him. Let us hope in the Lord continually. "Oh Israel, hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is abundant redemption, and He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." This is what the fainting Christian does; he hopes, he does not forget God's commandments, and he cries out to God. And having done so, he then believes that God will redeem him from all his iniquities and rescue him from the evil deeds of sinful men. Whatever sins we have committed in the past, that are joined together with our present afflictions and persecutions, will be forgiven if they are sincerely and seriously confessed in the presence of God. This is why Jesus died. "For with the Lord there is lovingkindness and with Him is abundant redemption." "And He will redeem Israel from all his iniquities." So let us come down to the front and together observe the Supper, remembering this blessed truth.

**4thly- The 4th way that fainting believers should seek help from Christ is by asking God to revive them to keep His Word remembering that Christ died so that you might do this.** (Verse 88)

"Revive me according to Your lovingkindness, so that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth." This Supper of remembering Christ is given to us so that we might feed upon Christ's faithfulness and thereby be nourished and strengthened and refreshed by the Remembrance of the One who has done everything so that we might be brought savingly into His kingdom. He has died so that we might be kept safely in His care, and be brought safely to His heavenly kingdom. Will He fail in His mission? It is impossible that He should. His grace is sure. It is definite. But our obedience to His Word and commandments is not sure at every point. He has given grace, but we must not receive it in vain. If we do we will find that ourselves fainting and not keeping the testimony of God's mouth. Instead let us come now and take the bread and drink the cup remembering

the one who died so that we might strong in His mighty power. Let us praise the One who has done valiantly on our behalf and who has won the battle for our soul's salvation. It is He who is mighty to save and mighty to keep. It is He who has exceeding great power to exercise on behalf of His people as they look to Him to help them keep His Word. Listen to the words of the Lord Jesus as He prayed before He went to the cross. John 17: 6 says, "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world." "They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word." "Now they have know that all things which You have given Me are from You." "For I have given to them the words which you have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from you; and they have believed that You sent Me." "I pray for them." "I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given me, for they are Yours." The Lord Jesus knows where we have kept His Word and where we have not. The Lord knows where we are weak and where we are strong in our faith. Listen to the words of the Lord Jesus to Peter and then we will apply them to ourselves. Luke 22: 14 says, "When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him." "Then He said to them, 'With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.'" "Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, 'take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.'" "And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.'" "Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.'" "But the hand of the betrayer is with Me on the table." "Then they began to question among themselves, which of it was that would do this thing." "Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest." All this took place around the time of the Supper. In verse 31 then Jesus said to Peter, "Simon, Simon!" "Indeed Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat." "But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." All of our sins, now that we are Christians are a temporary departure from Christ. The reason that we do not depart permanently, the reason that we return to Him is because He has prayed for us. Do you realize, my friends, that as we come to this table that Jesus Christ has prayed for you at this point, and at many points since by His intercession, that your faith would not fail? Jesus said that He was doing this for Peter at the very time that Peter failed Him



and denied Him as He was going to the cross. "I have prayed for you Peter that your faith may not fail." Can you identify with Peter? Then realize the greatness of the grace and power of Christ to uphold and strengthen your faith. That is why He died. That is why we rejoice and have confidence that we can go on to be His servants in righteousness and strengthen our brethren. It is because Christ has prayed for us.