

Series: Psalm
Title: True Happiness
Text: Ps 119: 1-8
Date: Jan 15, 2023
Place: SGBC, NJ

This is an acrostic psalm. The Hebrew alphabet has 22 letters. Psalm 119 has 22 parts. Each part begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Notice each heading. Aleph, Beth, Gimmel is the equivalent to our A,B,C. Each part has 8 verses. Each verse begins with the same letter of that part. The first part is titled Aleph; each verse begins with the letter Aleph. If we were reading Hebrew, we would see the first eight verses each begin with Aleph. This is an acrostic psalm.

The theme of this Psalm is the word of God. Its theme is the glory and profitableness of God through his word. In this Psalm, many words are used to describe the whole word of God, to describe the scriptures beginning to end. Only one verse in this Psalm does not have one of these words in it.

The words used to describe God's word in this psalm are:

- "Law" (torah). It means 'to teach' or 'direct.' Every word God given us in the scriptures is God's law. The whole Bible is the law of God. Every word is the teaching and direction given us of God. The psalmist probably only had the first 5 books of the Bible, called the Torah, the law. Now we have the completed word of God. The whole book is the law of God.
- "Word" (dabar). The idea is the spoken word from God's mouth to our hearts.
- "Word" (imrah). It carries a similar in meaning but it means the whole word of God.
- "Judgments" (mispatim). God's judgments are God's declaration of right and wrong. God's judgments make us see our sins and that we are sin in our old sinful man.
- Testimonies (edut/edot). This word means witnesses. God's testament is God's witness. The scriptures are divided into the old testament--the old testimonies of God--which was during the dispensation of the law; God's bears witness by the law given at Sinai that we are sinners. Then there is the new testament--the new testimonies of God--which declares this day the Lord Jesus has made is the day of grace, the age of the gospel that Christ is unto his people. In both the old and new testament scripture the gospel is the same, Christ and him crucified is the salvation of God's elect. Both are God's testimonies concerning his Son.
- Commandments (miswah/miswot). God's commandments declare God's authority and right to rule over his people. God gave commandments in the law of Sinai to make each born-again child know we are guilty sinners to drive us to Christ our Righteousness. The commandments of God's covenant of grace teach us to believe on his Son by whom his people are made the righteousness of God in him. The gospel commandments of God teach God's born-again child to love God our Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. They teach us to love God, as God our Father, for Christ's sake, loves his elect. And they teach us to love one another as Christ loved us and gave himself for us.
- Statutes (huqqim). Again, God's statutes declare the authority of God's written word
- Precepts (piqqudim). These are particular, detailed instructions given us from the Lord.

So when we read the word "law" or any of these other words, they do not merely mean the ten commandments alone. They refer to the whole word of God. But no matter the word used, they all have the same end. God's scriptures are all concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is the Word. He is the end of every word, every law, every commandment, precept, judgment, and statute. The testimonies of God our Father bear witness that God is satisfied with and by his Son. Every word teaches us to believe on Christ and follow him unto the end.

This Psalm is not telling us we can keep God's law given at Sinai, nor any of God's word, of ourselves. The only way we have kept God's law given at Sinai is in the perfect righteousness of Christ. It is by the obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ alone that God's elect are made righteous and holy. Through God-given faith which rests in Christ alone, God imputes the righteousness of his dear Son to us. But God's child does desire in our new man to obey every word of God.

In this psalm we hear Christ speak of himself. And in this psalm we hear the desire of David, a believer, for God to save him and make him obey God in all things from his new heart. In this psalm, every true believer hears our own heart's cry to God.

Today we will take the first section with its 8 verses.

Psalm 119: 1: ALEPH. Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.

Blessed means happy. Everyone wants to be happy. But most seek happiness exactly the opposite of how God makes his people happy. The world seeks happiness in riches, honor and pleasure.

Proposition: God declares that true happiness is believing and walking in the word of the LORD.

THE UNDEFILED IN THE WAY

The undefiled in the way are sinners saved by grace who walk by faith in Christ. The Way is the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ Jesus said that he is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He said that no man cometh to the Father but by me. He is the strait gate, the narrow way to eternal life. Believers walk by faith in Christ the Way.

The undefiled are those who walk by faith in Christ. It is not what we did that made us undefiled but what Christ accomplished *for and in* his people. All God's elect have been washed from our sins in the blood of the Lamb. God has clothed us with Christ's righteousness. In Christ, God's saints are perfect, complete, seated with Christ at God's right hand. In Christ, at God's right hand, we are every whit clean, without spot or blemish, blameless and unreprouvable, without fault before the judgment seat of God in his all-knowing sight.

By the Spirit of God giving us a new heart, we believe on Christ. We certainly desire to walk after Christ to keep ourselves undefiled and unspotted from this world. That is the heart in God's child. As Paul said, "We delight in the law of God in the inward man." But remember how Christ washed the disciples feet? He told Peter that those washed in his blood are every whit clean in Christ. But we must continually come to Christ confessing our sin that he might wash and cleanse us from defilement we pick up as we walk through this world. By God putting the love of Christ in our hearts, we wash one another's feet. We forgive and remind one another that Christ is our Righteousness. Our joy and assurance and motivation is that in Christ we are undefiled. Christ calls his bride, the church, "My dove, my undefiled." (Son 6: 9).

This good news--this gospel of Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior is the law we walk in--*who walk in the law of the LORD*. It is the gospel, the doctrine of Christ our Redeemer, the law of Christ. We walk by the law of faith and love which the Spirit of our Lord has written on our new heart--"the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith." (Gal 3: 11-12).

We walk by *the law of love* constrained by the love of Christ.

1 John 3:23: And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

1 John 4:21: And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

Ephesians 4: 31: Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. [that tells us our psalm is not speaking of being able to keep the law--we will have reason to forgive one another] 5: 1: Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2: And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

We walk by *the law of righteousness*. We certainly endeavor to live righteously as much as the Spirit enables. But to walk in the law of righteousness is to agree with God's righteous law. We are sinners. It is not that we are intently sinning against God. But it is that we agree with God that Christ is our only Righteousness. He is "the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth" (Rom 10: 1-3). The law of righteousness which God has written on our new heart makes us know our brethren are righteous in Christ. So it governs how we treat our brethren when they walk righteously or when they fall. If a brother walks righteously, we remind him Christ is our only Righteousness so that he does not become puffed up. If a brother falls, we remind him Christ is our only Righteousness so that he does not become overly sorrowful and fall away entirely.

We walk by the law of liberty that the Spirit of our Lord has written on our new hearts "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom 8: 2). He has taught us the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in Christ our Righteousness, our Peace, and our Joy! So if exercising our liberty will offend a weak brother, we endeavor not to put a stumblingblock before him. If the weak avoid certain meat or drink or days, so long as they do not make it a condition for salvation, we remember they do it as unto the Lord, the same as we have faith in that we allow.

THE WITNESSES

Psalm 119: 2: Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. 3: They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.

God's testimonies are his witness. Every word testifies, or bear witness, of his Son. God's word is not for us to seek life in this book by our own doing. Christ said to the Pharisees, "Search the scriptures. For in them you think you have life. But they are they which TESTIFY of me. And ye will not come to me that you might have life" (Jn 5: 39-40). "The TESTIMONY of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev 19: 10).

1 John 5: 6: This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7: For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 8: And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. 9: If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. 10: He that believeth on the Son of

God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. 11 And this is the record, [this is God's testimony of his Son--here is what all God's testimonies bear witness to] this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Gods' law given at Sinai are his testimonies. What does the law bear witness to? That every son of Adam is a guilty sinner, unable to come to God by our works. So the law stops our mouth. We keep this testimony of God by agreeing with God, confessing we are the sinner, crying, "God be merciful--propitious--to me the sinner" (Lu 18: 13).

The gospel is God's testimonies of his Son. At Sinai, Moses was the go-between, the Mediator between God and the children of Israel--that is God's testimony of his Son in type. The law and the prophets bear witness that righteousness is by the faith of Christ freely unto and upon the believer. That is God's testimony that his Son is the righteousness of his people.

Romans 3: 21: But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22: Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

God creates in us a whole heart and the Spirit of God testifies of his Son then we do as verse says, *we seek HIM with the whole heart*. Notice, how many times the heart is spoken of: verse 7: *I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments....*verse 10: *With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments...*verse 11: *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee*. We do not have a whole heart by nature. God creates it within his child.

Jeremiah 24:7: And I will give them an heart to know me, that I *am* the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

The new heart God creates is whole. It is holy. It is without sin, without guile. That is the heart God looks on.

John 1:47: Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

We do not worship God with our fleshly nature; the flesh profiteth nothing. But we worship God with the whole heart that God has made.

Romans 7: 22: For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

God looks on the whole heart he has made. Take a father with two children. One can walk, the other is just learning to walk. He calls them to him. One runs right to him while the other stumbles. He knows the heart in both was to obey their father. If the older or the younger falls, he knows their heart.

By faith in our hearts, God beholds us in Christ's Righteousness. Let me give you some examples. David fell many times. Some were great falls like the matter of Uriah and Bathsheba. Yet, because God looks on the whole heart he has made, Christ was his Righteousness with God. God said of David, God said, "My servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, and did that only which was right in mine eyes " (1 Kings, 14: 8).

Josiah sinned in his flesh. He even refused the warning of the Lord and went out in league with a wicked king and died in battle. But because God looked on his whole heart which rested in Christ alone as his holiness and his righteousness, God saw Josiah in the righteousness of his Son and God said this of Josiah. This is so of Christ so it is so of Josiah. "Like to him there was no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him " (2 Kings, xxiii. 25).

This is why God says in verse 3: *They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways*. God's people are just with men and walk in Christ's ways as much as the Spirit enables. But iniquity is any attempt at being righteous before God that falls short of the glory of God, which is every attempt. When God makes us "*upright in heart*" then we are no longer attempt to deceive God or men by claiming we are righteous by our works. We confess that all our righteousness's are iniquity. All falls short of the glory of God. We confess we are the sinner and Christ is our only Righteousness. It is not that we are without the sin of self-righteousness in our flesh. But Christ is our Righteousness in whom we rest.

Every believer seeks to walk as Christ walked. We seek to walk in his steps, in his ways. That is the desire of our whole heart, our new heart. But as we saw with David and Josiah, when Christ walked this earth all God's elect were in Christ and we walked in his ways in him. Therefore, when we walk by faith in Christ, God says we walk in Christ's ways. We walk in the righteousness of Christ's obedience when we walk by faith.

OUR CRY

Due to our sin-nature, our constant cry is for God to make us faithful and not forsake us. Verse 4: *Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.* But that does not mean we have the ability to do so of ourselves, especially not in the righteousness God demands. In fact, God's child never sees ourselves to have obeyed God as we ought. So seeing our sins, we cry, verse 5: *O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!* 6: *Then I shall not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments.* 7: *I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.* 8: *I will keep thy statutes.*

We are ashamed of our sin and that is the sincere longing of the new heart. But we never arrive to perfection in this life. Due to our sin, we cry, "*O forsake me not utterly.*" The puritan, Thomas Manton, points out that agreeing with the law that we are the sinner, mourning our sins, confessing to God our need of Christ, is to honor God's law. We justify God in the law's judgment that we are the sinner. And seeking remission of sin in Christ, while walking by faith and love, though our sin-nature will carry us aside sometimes, we keep the testimony of the Lord in a gospel sense, in sincerity and uprightness of heart.

Happiness is looking to Christ and following him. When our thoughts are filled with the cares of this life, we have no happiness. But when God enables us to set our affection on things above, not on the things of this life, then beholding Christ our Life, we are filled with happiness. When we sin, we find ourselves in bondage. But when the Lord enables us to look to Christ and believe every promise of God in him then we are set free and happy. When we look to our own works, we end up burdened and ashamed. But when we see that Christ is our Righteousness and God enables us to obey his command to cast all on Christ then we are happy.

Amen!