

Psalm 119: 65-72; “The Lord, our Faithful Teacher”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall to those gathered at the Premier Estates Nursing Home, on February 9th, 2020.

I will be good for us at this hour to think about how Faithful a God our God is to us. He is kind and good to each and every one of His people. The Psalmist David, in his prayers to God, declares that God has been very faithful and good to him, in the way that He has dealt with him in his life; to teach him and move him away from his sinful and worldly ways and to lead him into the path of obedience. He now prays for God to lead him in such a way that he would not have to be chastened again. He prays that he would come to have good discernment in spiritual things; things that would enable him to make progress in holiness and to glorify God by his life.

How is it with you, today, in your soul? In the deepest depths of your heart, how is it that you interact with God? Do you pray in your heart and mind regularly to be able to make progress in holiness? This is glorifying to God. Are you truly thankful for all that the Lord has done for you through the Lord Jesus Christ? This thankfulness the Lord would have each one of His people express to Him. These are the greatest realities to our God. I believe that we can show the Lord that we are thankful people by recounting the ways that He is good to us, like David did. There are 3 ways that we can do this.

1st – Let us praise Him and thank Him that He has dealt well with us, according to His Word. (verses 65 and 66)

Our God is a God Who is Faithful to all of what He has said in the Bible. All people who are ever saved, having intelligence of what is going on in their salvation, know that it is so. It is according to the truth of the Word of God that our salvation begins, according to God’s Faithfulness to His own purpose to do good to repentant sinners. David calls himself God’s servant here in verse 65. We who believe in Christ are His servants; He is our Master. But He is the best of Masters. He is good and kind. God deals in a good and kindly way with all who will trust in Him because of Jesus Christ our Lord. We serve Christ as our Master because God has been merciful and called us to have fellowship with Him. 1st Corinthians 1: 9 says – “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Your service to God is made good and pleasant by the realization that it is a “fellowship” that you are having with the Father and the Son. And this fellowship consists in your very real interaction with the Father and the Son around God’s Word. He is showing you His goodness and kindness by dealing well with you, blessing you with many earthy and spiritual blessings. You found Him when you sought Him, and you know that He dwells in your heart, and so now you find yourself praying to Him and seeking Him for every good thing. You used to pursue after vain things, things that would not profit your soul, but now we have been convinced by God’s Spirit working with us that the Bible is the best of books and that serving God according to truth is very desirable.

But the Psalmist David says, “Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe Your commandments. Do you believe that God’s commandments are for your good? Then you should greatly desire to keep them, and you will prove to yourself that it is so, and God will bless you in keeping them. The words “good judgment” in the Hebrew of verse 66 have the meaning of “taste” associated with them. “The goodness of taste”, says Matthew Poole in his commentary, is an experimental sense and relish of divine things.” It is “a judicious, solid, practical knowledge.” “I have believed Your commandments.” “I have believed the Divine authority of them, and the truth and certainty of those promises and threatenings which you have annexed to them.” (end of quote)

All of the commandments of God are precious to the Christian who is walking in the Light. They are not so much seen as precious when you are walking in darkness or sin; or when you

want the world more than you do, Jesus. I urge you to search your heart and see if this taste, this desire for this kind of walk with Christ is within you. Psalm 34: 8 says – “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!” “Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints!” “There is no want to those who fear Him.” “The young lions lack and suffer hunger; but those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing.” This promise is true, and you can prove it experientially to yourself by seeking the Lord for salvation from all of your sins, and for every good thing that you need for life and godliness. You should know that if you feel poor and needy in Your spirit that the Lord thinks upon you. And in turn, you should think upon Him.

If you read Psalm 139 through, you come to the place where David says in verse 23 – “How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!” “How great is the sum of them!” “If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with You.” David knew of God’s omniscience, and His goodness, and he extols them. Look at how he glories in God’s thoughts towards him; so many thoughts, so much loving concern which God showed towards him. God was always watching over him.

And dear listener if you will believe God’s word you will find continual reason for praising Him for His watchcare over your life. But then he also prays for good discernment of his own heart in verses 23 and 24. He says – “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Sometimes even a Christian may have anxieties which might lead him not to trust in God as they should. Sometimes a wicked attitude of anger or bitterness may arise in their heart. But if you will pray for the Lord to forgive you for these things and ask for grace to think better thoughts, God will give you that grace.

2nd – Let us praise Him and thank the Lord, today, that He has been so good and kind to us even in our afflictions. (verses 67, 68, and 71)

“Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word.” “You are good and do good; teach me your statutes.” “It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes.” Sometimes even a Christian can become unthankful for all the blessings that he or she has received. This can happen in regard to both the temporal earthly blessings of this life, and also the spiritual blessings which are given to us through our Lord Jesus. We can take all that the Lord is doing for us for granted, and we become very lazy and thoughtless in our learning to become doers of His Word, or in our giving of thanks in our spirit, in prayer, for blessings that we have received. In everything we ought to say, as David did – “You are good and You do good.” We do need to take heed to our spirit and to God’s word. “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.” (Hebrews 2: 1)

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd. He is faithful to take the shepherd’s crook and to guide us in the way that we should go. “Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.” He will be faithful to your soul to not turn away from you to do you good. In 1st Thessalonians 5: 18, Paul says, “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” We have an example of this, here, in David’s prayer. He was suffering affliction, but he was at the same time rejoicing in God’s goodness to him in his prayers. We should learn to pray because we need God, we should learn to praise because we love God, and when we do this, we will have a sense of his goodness to us having done this.”

Well, David had this sense even when he was afflicted. He was afflicted by God for a good purpose. It was because he had been straying from God’s Word. Since he had suffered this affliction, he now “kept God’s word”. So he had come to see the affliction as God’s goodness to him. I think that, too often, Christians think that if everything will go well with them, that they will then joyfully serve God. But God who knows the trickiness of our hearts, knows best what afflictions to lay upon us so that we will actually become what His Word teaches us that we should be. The apostle James says in his letter – “Consider it all joy, brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.” “But let

patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” It seems impossible that it should be so, doesn’t it? But God is able to do all those good things for you when you are undergoing trials. He will build faith and build character in your life.

In the life of a Christian, the afflictions that God ordains for them are most definitely designed in all their details, for their good. Think with me about Job chapter 36. In verse 5 we are told of God’s great wisdom in these things that pertain so much to our spiritual growth and well-being. These things were said by Elihu to Job to show him the goodness of God in His afflictions given to the righteous to learn by. “Behold, God is mighty, but He despises no one; He is mighty in strength of understanding.” “He does not preserve the life of the wicked, but gives justice to the oppressed.” “He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous; but they are on the throne with kings, for He has seated them forever, and they are exalted.”

“And if they are bound in fetters, held in the cords of affliction, then He tells them their work and their transgressions – that they have acted defiantly.” “He also opens their ear to instruction, and commands that they turn from iniquity.” “If they obey and serve Him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.” “But if they do not obey, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.” In verse 21, he says to Job, “Take heed, do not turn to iniquity, for you have chosen this rather than affliction.” Sometimes it is true that we do not see affliction as good for us. We choose to sin against God in thinking hard thoughts of Him. We choose to sin against other people who we believe are responsible for our afflicted condition.

But God is a master at teaching us His way and in working in our hearts to give us grace to accept it, if we will trust in Him. Verse 22 says, “Behold God is exalted by His power; who teaches like Him?” “Who has assigned Him His way, or who has said, ‘You have done wrong?’” “Remember to magnify His work, of which men have sung.” This is what we want to do. We want to remember to magnify His work; to make it as big as we can in our mind and heart. We rejoice in the fact that it has been given to us to have One Who, “in all our afflictions, He was afflicted.” In Isaiah 53: 7 it says that the Lord Jesus Christ “was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.”

Verse 4 says, “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted.” He, of all men, was the man who said, “It is good for me to be afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes.” The Lord Jesus, “even though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.” “And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.” We obey Jesus when we trust in Him not only for our salvation, but also to come to the place where we see the good that afflictions bring to us. In the hand of the Spirit of God, these afflictions become the very means of turning from sins in our hearts, sins in our words and actions, and they bring us to be more like Christ Himself.

And then 3rd – Let us praise Him that when wicked men treat us badly, that His precious Word will truly sustain us.

(verses 69, 70, and 72)

David knew that proud men had forged a lie against him. But even so, he was resolved to keep God’s precepts with all of his heart. They forged a lie; they hammered it out on the anvil of their selfish hatred for him. Lies are something which can greatly damage the testimony of God’s people. Or, if we show by our good behavior that it is not so, God can turn it to our advantage. It says of those that lied against David, “Their heart was as fat as grease”. It literally reads, “They have smeared me with a lie”. Certainly it is something which we would dread. But it happened to our Lord Jesus. The Pharisees and the leaders of the Jews forged a lie against Him. In Mark 14: 55 it says, “Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none.” “For many bore false witness against Him, but their

testimonies did not agree.” Verse 60 says – “And the High Priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus , saying ‘Do You answer nothing?’ ‘What is it these men testify against You?’ ‘But He kept silent and answered nothing.’ ‘Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, ‘Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?’ ‘Jesus said, ‘I am.’ ‘And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.’”

This was what convinced them that they should put Jesus to death. He had told them the truth about Himself. They chose to believe a lie. We should praise and thank our Lord for suffering for our sakes in this way. Because He endured these things, when wicked men treat us badly; when we are lied about and falsely represented, still God and His precious Word will truly sustain us. Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. But we as Christians can say with all confidence that “the law of God’s mouth is better to us than thousands of coins of gold and silver”. Christ was betrayed so that we can know the reality of this in our lives. We do not need much money to find happiness, satisfaction and pleasure in this life. We have Christ, and we have God’s word which better than thousands of coins of gold and silver. He is more precious than gold. Let us thank our God and our Christ for giving us the true riches, even the riches of His grace and truth.