

**Psalm 119: 153-160; “Christ – True to Perfection”, prepared for the residents  
of Premier Estates Nursing Home on February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016,  
by Pastor Paul Rendall.**

Whenever we are afflicted, whenever we are persecuted, whenever we are oppressed in our spirit because of the oppositions and oppressions of the evil one and evil men, we need to turn to our God in prayer, and ask Him to revive us. This is what King David is telling us that he did, in this passage of Scripture. God answered him with doing wondrous works on his behalf. And these marvelous works and these wonders will also be done for you, the praying believer, in order to strengthen you, in order that you might continue to do the will of God, and that you might glorify God in the time of affliction and trial. The revival of the spirit of the oppressed believer comes through God taking His blessed Word, and bringing home certain truths to their heart with power. God will bring you strength through the strength of Christ which is given to you. How did Christ purchase this strength? Christ purchased strength for you who believe, through his perfect obedience to God in His life, and his dying on the cross for our sins. One of the great applications of this redemption is strength to your heart, in order that you might be able to bear up under oppressions of spirit. The Lord Jesus prayed these same prayers of David's when He was oppressed in spirit. He prayed, as David did, that God would consider 3 things which were true to perfection in him. They were not true to perfection in David, although David is probably the author of this psalm. And they are not true to perfection in any other man; but they were true to perfection in our Lord Jesus Christ. The 1<sup>st</sup> is that Christ did not forget God's law. The 2<sup>nd</sup> is that Christ did not turn from God's testimonies. And the 3<sup>rd</sup> is that He loved God's precepts. Let's think about the perfection which was, and is, in our Lord Jesus Christ.

**The 1st thing which was true to perfection in Christ was that He did not forget God's law.** (Verses 153-155)

David says, “Consider my affliction and deliver me, for I do not forget Your law.” “Plead my cause and redeem me; revive me according to Your word.” “Salvation is far from the wicked, for they do not seek Your statutes.” David was a man who experienced affliction and he wanted deliverance. The reason for this affliction is found in verse 157 where he says, “Many are my persecutors and my enemies...” Here in these first few verses, David in prayer, is contrasting before God, his not forgetting God's law, with his wicked persecutors and all wicked people in general; the fact that they do not seek God's statutes. It is on this basis that he asks God to consider and deliver Him. In saying that he does not ever forget God's law. He is actually saying that he is remembering it to do it. He seeks God's statutes in order to keep them and to do them. I am sure that he was not saying this in the sense of the covenant of works. He was not saying that he never forgot to do the right thing and that God should deliver him because he was always perfect in His obedience. He was saying, however, that by grace it was his overall practice. His overall practice was to be godly; to remember God and His Word. And it was because he obedient to God, to remember His commandments, this was the reason that he was persecuted. When you take up the life of a Christian, you take up a life of not forgetting God or His law. You remember His law, His word. You seek His statutes. The definition of a wicked person is one who forgets God and doesn't seek His statutes. Those who forget God and His law, His Word, will most certainly perish forever.

Well, if persecution or distress or oppression of spirit is sometimes going to be the lot of the serious, godly Christian, then what should we remember to do in our afflictions? I would say, from these verses, that we must learn to pray. And we must pray remembering Christ. Remember, as you go through various trials and afflictions, that the only reason that you do not forget God's law as a Christian is because of Christ. Christ never once forgot God's law. He

remembered it perfectly by meditating upon it day and night. He did not forget to pray or to ask God to plead our cause. Our cause is the cause of Christ; the cause of truth and meekness, and righteousness. He knew that it was because wicked men had forgotten God's law, that He was being persecuted. He knew that it was because his enemies could not convict Him of sin that they hated him. It was because He was perfectly faithful that He was afflicted by wicked men. It was because He was perfectly righteous and obedient that He was afflicted by God and smitten at the cross. You say, "How could this be just in God; that He would afflict His righteous Son at the cross?" It was because God knew that you were without strength in yourself to keep the commandments of God perfectly as Jesus did. Therefore, out of His love for you, the sinner, He would afflict His Son in your place so that you could be forgiven. God the Father would have regard for the righteousness of His Son's life. He would remember His Son Jesus in all of His obedience to His law, so that you could be justified. He would give His Son to suffer so that you would not forget His law, and so that you would be sustained in all your afflictions.

Jesus alone was true to all the fine points of perfection in His keeping of the law of God. This, my friend, is the basis of your being sustained and upheld during all of your afflictions, and the basis also of your deliverance from all of your trials of as well. Psalm 34: 17 – "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all." What was the basis of David's confidence when he said that he had not forgotten God's law? Was it himself, or was it the grace which God had given him? It was God's grace for sure; for he prays for God to revive him in verse 154. A person only prays to be revived if the life of God is working in their soul to keep them persevering in their faith when their spirit is low. We do not sustain ourselves in the Christian life. God, through Jesus Christ sustains and upholds us. Therefore let us praise our Savior for this great salvation which is ours by faith. Let us praise the One who pleads our cause and will deliver us; redeeming our life from all distress.

**Then 2<sup>nd</sup> – The thing which was true to perfection in Christ is that He did not turn from God's testimonies.** (Verses 156-158)

"Great are Your tender mercies, O Lord; revive me according to Your judgments." "Many are my persecutors and my enemies, yet I do not turn from Your testimonies." "I see the treacherous, and am disgusted, because they do not keep Your words." This is the kind of tender mercy that God shows to us in our conversion to Christ. Christ did die in our place. We respond, "Great are your tender mercies, O Lord..." "Revive me according to Your judgments".

In other words, you may see the treachery of people around you. They say one thing and do another. You may be disgusted by the sinfulness of their words and actions. You are most definitely concerned for the honor and glory of God. But if that is the case, will you not remember that the right thing to do is to turn to God's word, and to pray for His help. If you know the power of His grace working in your heart, you will not turn from God's testimonies to take your own revenge, or hold a grudge against someone who has done wrong to you. If you are like David you will not turn from God's testimonies. The reason that David was able to have feelings of grief over the sins of his enemy Saul and his own son Absalom who became his enemy, was because he had the grace of Christ at work in his heart. Saul and Absalom were not keeping God's word in relation to him, and yet he did not hate them. He did not wish evil upon them. He did not take matters of justice into his hands. Why? Because he knew how great God's tender compassions and mercies had been toward himself. He was taught by the Holy Spirit of God to know how great his own need was to be forgiven of his own sins. He prayed in Psalm 51, after his sin with Bathsheba, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." "Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me." "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit."

You see he was being upheld in his trials and afflictions. He was being taught by God to be able to do His will and to love those who had become his enemies. I am saying that he learned this by

the grace of God which was coming to him based upon the life and work of Jesus Christ who would come later in time to His Messiah, the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world; the Lion of the tribe of Judah to give him strength to stand in the evil day. You see this same thing in the life of Jesus Christ, and in Him it is lived to perfection. Listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 5: 38. “You have heard it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’” “But I tell you not to resist an evil person.” “But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.” “If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.” “And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.” “Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.” “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’” “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.” That was Christ’s teaching, and He lived it to perfection, for each one who will trust in Him.

**The 3rd thing that was true to perfection in Christ was that He loved God's precepts.** (verses 159 and 160)

David prays in verse 159, “Consider how I love Your precepts.” “Revive me, O Lord, according to Your lovingkindness.” We have seen how David prayed, “Revive me according to Your word” in verse 154. We need very much to see that this was probably David’s prayer at the point of His death. “Consider how I love your precepts.” “Revive me, O Lord according to Your lovingkindness.” In closing, let me read to you a part of Psalm 69; verse 13 specifically. This is once again a psalm of David. But it is also a prophetic prayer; prophetic of what Jesus thought in prayer when He was dying upon the cross. “But as for me, my prayer is to You, O Lord, in the acceptable time; O God, in the multitude of Your mercy, Hear me in the truth of Your salvation.” “Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink; let me be delivered from those who hate me, and out of the deep waters.” “Let not the floodwater overflow me, nor let the deep swallow me up; and let not the pit shut its mouth on me.” “Hear me, O Lord, for Your lovingkindness is good; turn to me according to the multitude of your tender mercies.” You see, this is the fulfillment of the prayer, “Revive me, O Lord, according to Your lovingkindness.” God did answer this prayer. God did give Christ the strength to be upheld when He went to the cross.

Luke 23: 33 says, “And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand the other on the left.” “Then Jesus said, ‘Father forgive them, for they do not know what they do.’” This was one of the ways that our Lord was upheld and revived and strengthened to do God’s will in enduring the sufferings of the cross. He forgave His enemies even as they were sinning against Him. His purpose was to save the elect among them. He wanted to show them how great God’s mercy could be to them, even then. What about you, dear Christian believer? Have you forgiven, from the heart, each and every person that has sinned against you in word or in deed? Are you showing others, who have sinned against you God’s willingness to forgive them, by your doing as Jesus did? When you came to Jesus Christ for salvation did He forgive all of your sins; that great debt which you could never pay? He most certainly did. Then, when someone sins a sin against you; can you really hold this sin against them, and withhold the forgiveness of your heart, suspending it upon their asking forgiveness for you in the way that will be acceptable to you? You may never have that opportunity. They may die or you may die before that happens. The debt that they owe to you is much less than that which you owed to God. You must forgive them from your heart even if they have never told you that they have repented and you are able to joyfully grant them your formal forgiveness. But when you do this, you will have become more like the Lord Jesus, and you will know more of the reality of the blessings of grace strengthening you heart. May it be so for each of us.

