

Subject: *Living by the Book*

Scripture: *Psalm 119:73-88*

As we reach the halfway mark in this monumental chapter we continue to look at a life dominated and controlled by God and His Word. Here's something to think about: God's relationship with us is mostly through words He has spoken or written. By nature God is Spirit. He is invisible, so we can't know Him as a physical being. The only exception to that was during Christ's ministry on earth. But during the Old Testament age and now during the church age our relationship with God is based on what He says in His written Word. If we are ever going to know God it is through His Word. If we are going to know Him well it is through knowing His Word well. If we know God well we can navigate through life no matter what our circumstances or challenges may be.

As we read this part of Psalm 119 we find that the writer makes some statements, offers some prayer requests, and asks some questions. We will use those categories as our outline:

STATEMENTS OF FAITH

- God is our Creator (vs. 73-74)

This is always the right starting place for our faith. We are not here by chance or accident. He made us and we must depend on Him and give account to Him.

***Psalms 100:3** Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

***Psalms 139:14-16** ¹⁴ I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. ¹⁵ My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. ¹⁶ Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.*

Since God is our Creator He is the one who knows what we need and how we should live. Since He is our Creator we must fear (have deep reverence for) Him and trust what He says.

- God is righteous and faithful (vs. 75)

God's Word is right because He is always right. Abraham said, ***Genesis 18:25*** *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* He is too wise to make a mistake. He knows what He is doing. The psalmist knows that God has providentially permitted his suffering (vs. 67, 71).

- God is our source of hope (vs. 81, 83)

When things seem hopeless we can have hope in God's Word (vs. 81). The psalmist felt worthless (vs. 83), like a dry, cracked bottle (wineskin), but he remembered God's Word. Our capacity to remember is a gift from God. Someone asked a young boy, "Do you know what memory is?" He said, "It's that thing you forget with." How is it that we can remember bad things, but not remember God's Word? How can we remember trivial, silly things, but not remember the profound truths of God's Word? The purpose of remembering God's Word is not to see how many verses we can recall, but it's a matter of life and death.

- God is our source of protection (vs. 85-87)

The writer had enemies who wanted to hurt him. Proud, arrogant people dug deep pits to trap him. They persecuted him when he didn't deserve it and almost destroyed him, but he looked to God for help and kept trusting His Word (vs. 87). It's always too soon to give up.

PRAYERS OF NEED

Notice that verses 76-80 all begin with the word "let." These are all prayers and they are in some way connected to God's Word. What did he pray for?

- A prayer for comfort (vs. 76) – God's Word is the source of comfort.
- A prayer for mercy (vs. 77) – God's Word is the source of spiritual life.
- A prayer for justice (vs. 78) – God's Word is the source of assurance and peace.
- A prayer for support (vs. 79) – God's Word is the source of true fellowship (vs. 63).
- A prayer for integrity (vs. 80) – God's Word is the source of godly character.

We have the same needs. We need comfort, mercy, justice, support, and integrity.

QUESTIONS OF CONCERN

There are three questions the writer asks and all three are about the same thing (vs. 82, 84).

- Waiting on God is hard, especially when we're suffering

Remember how Job pleaded with God to come and prove that he was blameless? It was hard for Job to wait on God.

David asked in ***Psalms 13:1-2*** ¹ *How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?* ² *How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?* It was hard for David to wait on God.

Even the saints in heaven are waiting on God. ***Revelation 6:9-10*** ⁹ *And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:* ¹⁰ *And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* Faith has a trust element and a time element. We trust God to do the right thing, but we have no idea how long it might be. Knowing God's Word helps us to wait on Him.

Psalms 27:14 *Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.*

We make our statements of faith based on God's Word.

We lift our prayers of need based on God's Word.

We have our questions of concern, but we rest in God's Word.