

Psalm 119 (verses 57-72)

CHETH

“The earth, O LORD is full of thy mercy”

Verses 57-64:

True believers take the LORD for the portion of their inheritance, so then nothing less will satisfy them.

The psalmist prayed with his whole heart, knowing how to value the blessing he prayed for: he desired the mercy promised, and depended on the promise for it.

He turned from by-paths, and returned to God's testimonies.

He delayed not.

It behooves sinners to hasten to escape; and the believer will be equally in haste to glorify God.

No care or grief should take away God's word out of our minds, or hinder the comfort it bestows.

There is no situation on earth in which a believer has not cause to be thankful.

Let us feel ashamed that others are more willing to keep from sleep to spend the time in sinful pleasures, than we are to praise God.

And we should be more earnest in prayer, that our hearts may be filled with his mercy, grace, and peace.

Psalm 119:57 "Thou art] my portion, O LORD: I have said that I would keep thy words."

CHETH: The Eighth Part.

“Thou art my portion, O LORD”:

Which he chose and preferred to all others.

To the riches, honors, and profits of this world.

The grant of which was made to him in the covenant of grace; the first discovery of it was from the LORD himself.

And the choice and claim were made under the influence of his grace.

And a great act of faith it is to assert this, and a wonderful blessing to enjoy it.

This is a large portion indeed, immense and inconceivable, soul satisfying, safe, and for ever!
(See Psalm 73:26).

"I have said that I would keep thy words":

Keep his commandments, lay up his promises, observe his doctrines, profess and retain them.

This he determined within himself to do, under a sense of the love of God to him, in being his portion and inheritance.

Some render the words, in connection with the former, thus, "my portion, O LORD, I said, is", or "shall be, to keep thy words".

It is the part and partial of some to preach the word, and of others to hear it.

And of all to keep or observe it, its precepts, promises, and truths.

Aben Ezra gives the sense of them thus, "This I said to many, perhaps they will keep thy words;" namely, that the LORD was his portion, which he thought might induce them to an observance of them, as he had done.

We can see in this, that the LORD is the portion of each person who seeks and finds Him.

Salvation is not a collective thing.

God offers salvation to the masses, but saves them one at a time.

Our relationship with God, must be a personal relationship.

Joining a church is not what I am speaking of.

The Lord is my personal God.

He would have given His body on the cross, if I had been the only person who needed saving.

The psalmist's decision to keep God's Word is also personal.

I cannot promise for anyone, but myself.

Psalm 119:58 "I entreated thy favor with [my] whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word."

Or, "thy face"; to see it; or thy presence, to enjoy it.

To have communion with God, and the light of his countenance; than which nothing is more desirable and delightful to a gracious man.

As also to be remembered with the special favor of God, in which is life.

To have his love shed abroad in the heart; to have large views of interest in it, and to be rooted and grounded therein.

And this the psalmist entreated, not in a hypocritical manner, but with all sincerity, heartiness, and affection, having tasted that the LORD was gracious.

Or, "made thy face sick"; wearied him with supplications, and gave him no rest until he obtained his request.

"Be merciful unto me, according to thy word":

Have compassion on me.

Sympathize with me in all my troubles.

Grant me fresh supplies of grace; and particularly show and apply thy pardoning grace and mercy to me.

According to thy word of promise in the covenant of grace, in which provision is made for forgiveness of sins (see Psalm 51:1).

Aben Ezra and Kimchi both think reference is had to (Exodus 33:19), but rather it is to (2 Samuel 12:13).

We used the following Scripture in another recent lesson, but it says so clearly what I need to say here, that I will use it again.

Mark 12:33 "And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love [his] neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

If God cannot have 100% of your heart, He will not take any at all.

He does not want any half-way commitments.

These few verses here, are focusing in on God's part in all of this.

The psalmist is not asking for mercy on his own merits, but on the merits of the Word of God.

Psalm 119:59 "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies."

What they were, whether right or wrong.

Whither they led, what would be the consequences of walking in them.

The Septuagint and Arabic versions read, "thy ways"; no doubt the psalmist thought of both.

Of his own ways, in which he had walked; and of God's ways, which he directed him to walk in.

And, considering the superior pleasure and profit of the latter, he preferred them to the former.

The Targum is, "I thought to mend my ways", or "make them good".

Hence he took the following step.

"And turned my feet unto thy testimonies":

He took himself to the word of God, which testifies of his will, and directs to those ways he would have his people to walk in.

And he steered his course of life and actions thereby.

He turned from his own ways into the ways of God; under the influence of divine grace, he turned, being turned.

He is saying here, that his decision to turn unto God's testimonies was not a sudden decision.

He had considered carefully and then made his decision.

Psalm 119:60 "I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments."

As soon as he was sensible of his duty, he immediately complied with it.

He consulted not with flesh and blood, but at once yielded a cheerful obedience to the commands of God.

Instances of evangelical obedience of this kind we have in the three thousand converts, in Saul, and in the jailer and his house (Acts 2:41).

After he had carefully considered the Word of God, and decided to follow in the testimonies of God, then he hurriedly made it right with God.

This is speaking of speed, after he had decided repenting was the right thing to do.

After he made his decision, he realized the urgency of being saved.

Psalm 119:61 "The bands of the wicked have robbed me: [but] I have not forgotten thy law."

Very probably Saul and his ministers seized on his effects, when he fled from him.

And the Amalekites plundered him of all his substance, when they took Ziklag.

And Absalom and the conspirators with him robbed him, when he was obliged, because of them, to flee from his palace and court, which they entered and took possession of.

But Aben Ezra rejects this sense of the word, which Jarchi and Kimchi espouse, and we follow, and renders it, "took hold of me".

And so the Targum, "the company of the wicked were gathered together against me."

They surrounded him and put him into fear, great numbers of them encompassing him about (see Psalm 18:4).

"But I have not forgotten thy law":

This was written in his heart.

He kept it in his memory, and retained an affection for it.

And could not be deterred from obedience to it by the numbers and violence of wicked men, who hated and persecuted him for his attachment to it.

A band means that this was not an individual, but a group. They have robbed him of his material goods, but this did not affect his position with God.

He still remembers and keeps the law.

Psalm 119:62 "At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments."

Not only send up an ejaculatory thanksgiving upon his bed, but rise up from it and shake off his sleep, and in a set, serious, solemn manner, praise the LORD.

This shows a great regard to him, and affection to this work, since it is with difficulty men prevail upon themselves to rise at midnight upon any occasion.

At midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sung praises to God (Acts 16:25).

"Because of thy righteous judgments":

Upon the wicked, as Aben Ezra.

The hands and troops of them that encompassed him about, and robbed him.

But God avenged him of them, and for this he gave thanks, or for such like things.

Sometimes the judgments of God have been executed at midnight; as the destruction of the firstborn in Egypt, and of Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea, when Israel sang his praise (Exodus 12:29).

And for the judgments of God upon antichrist the church will rejoice and give thanks (see Revelation 18:20).

Or rather by these may be meant the word of God, the precepts and ordinances of it, which are all just and good.

Such is the law of God, and such are the ordinances of Christ (Psalm 19:9).

If you were to rise at midnight to give thanks to God, it would not be for others eyes.

This would be a personal thanksgiving for His righteous judgements.

Jesus is the Righteous Judge.

Those who do keep His commandments, have nothing to fear from the righteous judgement of the LORD.

Psalm 119:63 "I [am] a companion of all [them] that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts."

Not of the rich and mighty, much less of the wicked and ungodly.

But of such who had the true fear of God upon their hearts, and before their eyes.

Who feared the LORD and his goodness, and truly served and worshipped him; even "all" of these, whether poor or rich, of whatsoever condition, or of whatsoever nation, being no respecter of persons.

With these he was a partner in the blessings of the covenant, in the promises of it, in the graces of the Spirit.

He went in company with them to the house of God, and then joined with them in all acts of religious worship.

He conversed privately with them about what God had done for the souls of him and them.

He delighted in their company.

He sympathized with them in their troubles, and was a companion with them in their tribulation, sorrows, and sufferings, as well as in their joys and comforts.

"And of them that keep thy precepts":

As all such do who truly fear the LORD.

For by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil, and cannot do those things that others do.

Cannot allow themselves in a willful transgression of the divine precepts; but, influenced by the fear of God, observe and keep them.

This is saying that he fellowships with those of like belief.

We are told, over and over, not to be unequally yoked to those of unbelief.

This would be like fellowshiping with the members of your church.

To fellowship with the world brings heartache.

Fear in this instance, is speaking of holding God in reverence.

Psalm 119:64 "The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes."

Full of the proofs of thy goodness and compassion.

See the notes at (Psalm 33:5).

This is the expression of a heart full of love to God and to his word.

In such a state of mind as the psalmist was in, the goodness of God is seen everywhere.

The best preparation for seeing evidence that God is good is a heart full of love.

Then the proofs of that love spring up on every side, as when we truly love a friend we find constant proofs of his excellency of character.

"Teach me thy statutes":

I desire to see more and more of thy law.

Thou art so gracious and merciful, the evidence of thy goodness is so widespread round about me, that it leads me to desire to see more and more of thyself and thy law.

The sun shines, because of the mercy of God.

The rain waters the crops, because of the mercy of God.

I am living and breathing because of the mercy of God.

I could go on and on, but you can get the picture from this.

The earth is filled with the mercy of God.

The Scripture says, it rains on the just and the unjust.

God is merciful.

He is not willing for even one to be lost.

Someday the patience of God will run out.

God will not force Himself upon anyone, but He will teach His ways to those who are willing to receive the salvation that He made available to all.

TETH
“Teach me good judgment”

Verses 65-72:

However, God has dealt with us, he has dealt with us better than we deserve; and all in love, and for our good.

Many have knowledge, but little judgment.

Those who have both, they are fortified against the snares of Satan, and furnished for the service of God.

We are most apt to wander from God, when we are easy in the world.

We should leave our concerns to the disposal of God, seeing we know not what is good for us.

LORD, thou art our bountiful Benefactor; incline our hearts to faith and obedience.

The psalmist will go on in his duty with constancy and resolution.

The proud are full of the world, and its wealth and pleasures; these make them senseless, secure, and stupid.

God visits his people with affliction, that they may learn his statutes.

Not only God's promises, but even his law, his precepts, though hard to ungodly men, are desirable, and profitable, because they lead us with safety and delight unto eternal life.

Psalm 119:65 "Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD, according unto thy word."

TETH: The Ninth Part.

In a providential way, ever since he had a being; by the protection and preservation of him.

By following and loading him with benefits.

By raising him from a low estate to the throne of Israel.

By delivering him from many dangers and enemies, and by giving him rest from them all.

And in a way of special grace and mercy, by making an everlasting covenant with him.

By blessing him with all spiritual blessings.

By giving him an interest in salvation by Christ, and hope of eternal glory.

And thus, he deals with all his servants.

He does all things well by them.

He deals well with them even when he afflicts them.

He treats them as his David, his beloved and chosen ones, and his children.

The Syriac version renders it as a petition, "do good with thy servant"; bestow benefits on him, or deal bountifully with him (as in Psalm 119:17).

"O LORD, according unto thy word":

Thy word of promise.

Providential mercies are according to promise, for godliness or goodly persons have the promise of the things of this life.

And so are spiritual blessings, they are laid up in exceeding great and precious promises, which are yea and amen in Christ.

And so is eternal glory and happiness.

It is a promise which God, that cannot lie, made before the world began.

So that there is a solid foundation laid for faith and hope as to these things; and this confirms and commends the faithfulness of God to his people.

There is a change of tense here.

The psalmist is speaking in the past tense.

The psalmist is looking back to the times that the LORD had kept His Word with the psalmist.

He still speaks of himself as the servant.

This means that he had decided to serve the LORD, and the LORD had blessed him mightily.

Psalm 119:66 "Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments."

The word rendered "judgment" means "taste" that power by which we determine the quality of things as sweet, bitter, or sour.

When applied to the mind or understanding, it refers to determining the moral quality of things, to discerning what is right or wrong, wise or foolish, good or evil.

The ability to fully appreciate what is right, and quickly distinguish it from what is wrong, is one of the gifts of God.

This is not someone seeking the LORD.

This person is already saved.

He is just asking to grow in knowledge and judgement.

Christianity is a walk.

It is not a one-time happening, and then never doing any more about it.

When we at the first receive the Lord, we are baby Christians and are fed on milk and honey of the Word.

Later we are supposed to grow in the Lord, and put away childish things, and get into the meat of the Word.

The best way to acquire knowledge of the Word, is to study your Bible.

Psalm 119:67 "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word."

From God.

From his word, his ways and worship.

Like a lost sheep from the shepherd, the fold, the flock, and the footsteps of it (see Psalm 119:176).

Not that he willfully, wickedly, maliciously, and through contempt, departed from his God; this he denies (Psalm 18:21).

But through the weakness of the flesh, the prevalence of corruption, and force of temptation, and very much through a careless, heedless, and negligent frame of spirit.

He got out of the right way, and wandered from it before he was well aware.

The word is used of erring through ignorance (Lev. 5:18).

This was in a time of prosperity, when, though he might not, like Jeshurun, wax fat and kick, and forsake and lightly esteem the Rock of his salvation.

Or fall into temptations and harmful lusts, and err from the faith, and be pierced with many sorrows, as too much love of the world brings men into.

Yet he might become inattentive to the duties of religion, and be negligent of them, which is a common case.

"But now have I kept thy word":

Having been afflicted with outward and inward afflictions.

Afflictions of body and mind.

Afflictions in person, in family and estate.

Afflictions in the soul, and through indwelling sin, the temptations of Satan, and the hidings of God's face.

All this brought him back again to God, to his word, ways, and worship.

He took himself to reading and hearing the word, if he might find anything to relieve and comfort him under his trials.

He observed the doctrines of grace in it, and kept the precepts of it, and walked in all the commandments and ordinances of it, being restored by afflictions.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God, but fortunately we do not have to stay in that lost condition.

We can repent and be saved, and then grow each day in the LORD.

Salvation is a daily walk.

The psalmist is saying that after he repented, he has kept the Word of God.

Psalm 119:68 "Thou [art] good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes."

"Thou are good":

The psalmist frequently appeals to the character of God:

- (1) His faithfulness (verses 75, 90);
- (2) His compassion (verse 77);
- (3) His righteousness (verses 137, 142), and;
- (4) His mercy (verse 156).

There is only one good, and that is God.

The psalmist here, is recognizing the fact that God's ways are good ways.

He wants to learn the ways of God, so that he can walk in the goodness God has shown him.

Psalm 119:69 "The proud have forged a lie against me: [but] I will keep thy precepts with [my] whole heart."

Or, "sewed a lie to him"; fastened a lie upon him, or sewed and added one lie to another.

Either with respect to politics, as the proud and haughty courtiers of Saul, who represented David to him as a traitor.

That had treasonable designs against him to take away his life, and seize his crown and kingdom (1 Sam. 24:9).

Or with respect to religion.

So some proud scornful men, that derided him for his piety, and scoffed at his seriousness, gave out that it was all grimace and hypocrisy.

Raised calumnies upon him, and laid things to his charge he knew nothing of.

And which were all lies, forged out of their own brains, and artfully and purposely put together to blacken his character, and lessen his esteem among men.

And it is no unusual thing for wicked men to speak all manner of evil falsely against the people of God.

"But I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart":

Observe the commands of God sincerely, heartily, and affectionately, and not in show and appearance only; and so make it evident that it was a lie that was forged against him.

And this is the best way of answering such liars and defamers (see 1 Peter 3:16).

There is no reason for the proud not to lie.

They are not of God, and they do not keep God's Word.

They do not even believe in God's Word, so why would they not lie, if it would benefit them?

The psalmist is saying, that he will keep doing the teachings of God.

Even though they lied about him to get an advantage over him, he will not lie to get the advantage over them.

He regards God's Word too highly to sin to get even.

Psalm 119:70 "Their heart is as fat as grease; [but] I delight in thy law."

"Is as fat as grease":

Refers to the proud of verse 69 whose hearts are thick and thus the Word is unable to penetrate.

This type of heart is an evil heart stayed upon desires of the flesh.

The fatness here, would be a harm and not a help. Those who delight in the law of God, have a pure heart.

Psalm 119:71 "[It is] good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes."

The good and profit of which he had observed before (see Notes Psalm 119:67).

The following end being also answered thereby.

"That I might learn thy statutes":

To understand them, and to keep them.

Afflictions are sometimes as a school to the people of God, in which they learn much both of their duty and of their privileges.

And when they are teaching and instructive, they are for good (see Psalm 94:12).

Many a person has come to God and received salvation during great afflictions.

If it takes afflictions to bring a person to God, then bring on the afflictions.

This had certainly been the way it had been with the Israelites.

They lived in sin, until God allowed afflictions to come upon them.

Each time they repented of their sins.

Jesus put it even more severe.

Mark 9:43 "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:"

Psalm 119:72 "The law of thy mouth [is] better unto me than thousands of gold and silver."

The law which proceeds out of thy mouth, or which thou hast spoken.

"Is better unto me":

The Hebrew is, "Good to me is the law of thy mouth above thousands of gold and silver."

"Than thousands of gold and silver":

Than any amount of wealth.

It is to me the most valuable possession; that which I prize above all other things (compare notes at Psalm 19:10).

There is not enough money in the world to trade for the law of God.

Gold and silver are temporary luxuries for this earth.

The law of God brings life to those who keep it.

The law of thy mouth is the spoken Word of God.

What would you exchange for your soul?

Psalm 119 (verses 57-72) Questions

1. Salvation is not a _____ thing.
2. God offers salvation to the masses, but He saves them _____ at a _____.
3. The psalmist decision to keep God's Word is also, _____.
4. What percentage of your heart is the only percentage God will settle for?

5. The psalmist is asking for mercy on whose merits?
6. Verse 59 says, that he considered _____, and then made his decision.
7. When did he begin to hurry?
8. Is a band one person or a group?
9. In verse 62, when did he rise to give thanks?
10. What is different about giving thanks at midnight?
11. Who was the psalmist companion to?
12. Who is the Righteous Judge?
13. Name just a few of the merciful things God does every day.
14. Who does God teach His ways?
15. In verse 65, what does the psalmist call himself?
16. In verse 66, what two things did the psalmist ask God to teach him?
17. How is the best way to acquire knowledge of the Word?
18. _____ have sinned and come short of the glory of God.
19. Salvation is a daily _____.
20. Who is the only good One?
21. Why would it be logical for the proud to lie?
22. In verse 70, their heart is as fat as _____.
23. It is good for me that I have been _____.
24. What was the more severe statement Jesus made about afflictions?
25. What is the law of Thy mouth?