

Psalm 119 (Part 2)

9/29/2024

It has been said - 'when you come to a fork in the road take it. And in a way this is what we do. We decide to take a path with every decision we make. The question is - What guides us in those decision?

I would like to begin this morning with a few words about considering this subject of learning and decision making.

Jeremiah 6:16-19

This is what the Lord says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, 'We will not walk in it.' I appointed watchmen over you and said, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But you said, 'We will not listen.' Therefore hear, you nations; you who are witnesses, observe what will happen to them. Hear, you earth: I am bringing disaster on this people, the fruit of their schemes, because they have not listened to my words and have rejected my law."

These words of God spoken through the prophet Jeremiah came just before the nation was taken away into Babylonians captivity.

We find a similar situation recorded in Matthew 24. There Matthew records the words of Jesus and the impending doom for the city of Jerusalem.

And 7 centuries earlier God spoke through the prophet Isaiah to warn Israel of the impending doom coming their way via Assyria.

In Romans 1 Paul spoke of what the people around him were seeing as being caused by the wickedness of men and not thinking it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God.

And just this week there was an article in the news about a person who was upset and made a complaint to the airline they were flying on because a stewardess had said to them 'have a blessed evening'.

Next we have 3 examples of learning or at least attempts at learning. And 3 statements about learning from Scripture.

All I know is that I know nothing.
— Socrates (470-399BC)

"For I found myself embarrassed with so many doubts and errors that it seemed to me that the effort to instruct myself had no effect other than the increasing discovery of my own ignorance" — Rene Descartes (1596-1650AD)

Sixty years ago I knew everything; now I know nothing; education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance. — Will Durant (1885-1981AD)

Proverbs 1:7 *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,
but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”*

Proverbs 9:10 *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,
and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”*

Romans 15:4 *“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our
learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”*

In last week's lesson I began with a review of Psalm 19 which was the subject of the previous week's lesson. And in last week's lesson I referenced the first verse of Psalm 1. In all 3 of these psalms (1, 19, & 119) God's Word and the wisdom one can attain by knowing and following it is on display. Here is Psalm 1

1. *Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,*
2. *but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,
and who meditates on his law day and night.*
3. *That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers.*
4. *Not so the wicked!
They are like chaff
that the wind blows away.*
5. *Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.*
6. *For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.*

You may have noticed that in Psalm 1 there are 6 verses. The first 3 are about the blessings and positive effects of following God's Word, and the last 3 verses are about doing the opposite.

Earlier in this lesson I also presented 6 statements. 3 from men who learned lessons from mankind and how that turned out. And 3 from Scripture which speak of learning from God's Word and how that turns out.

I think we as humans tend to learn things the hard way. We are more inclined to go down the path that Socrates, Will Durant and Rene Descartes did in their education of things, than to learn from God's Word and His wisdom. The key to making the right choice in this matter is found in the middle verse of the first 3 verses in Psalm 1. That is

- “but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.”

And this is the 1st thing I would like for us to take note of this morning concerning the one spoken of here in Psalm 119. When to consider God’s Word in our lives.

147 - *“I rise before dawn and cry for help; I have put my hope in your word.”*

97 - *“Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.”*

164 - *“Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous laws.”*

55 - *“In the night, Lord, I remember your name, that I may keep your law.”*

148 - *“My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promises.”*

62 - *“At midnight I rise to give you thanks for your righteous laws.”*

Thus we have here -

1. at dawn
2. all day long
3. 7 times a day
4. in the night
5. through the watches of the night
6. at midnight.

I think we all have had times when we tend to draw closer to God and His Word. As a line in the song ‘freedom never cries’ by the group ‘five for fighting’ declares - ‘I only talk to God when somebody's about to die’. Far too many only call upon God for help when they find themselves incapable of resolving a situation. When hope seems lost. And perhaps we as Christians can fall into this trap as well. Perhaps it is only when we are in need, or in fear or have some great concern over something or someone that we turn our attention to God in Prayer or His Word to ask for help. Do we find ourselves praying more during these times? Notice how many times the one spoken of here in Psalm 119 turns to God and His Word for answers.

23 - *“Though rulers sit together and slander me, your servant will meditate on your decrees.”*

42 - *“then I can answer anyone who taunts me, for I trust in your word.”*

51 - *“The arrogant mock me unmercifully, but I do not turn from your law”*

61 - *“Though the wicked bind me with ropes, I will not forget your law.”*

67 - *“Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word.”*

71 - *“It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.”*

78 - *“May the arrogant be put to shame for wronging me without cause; but I will meditate on your precepts.”*

86-87 - *“All your commands are trustworthy; help me, for I am being persecuted without cause. They almost wiped me from the earth, but I have not forsaken your precepts.”*

95 - *“The wicked are waiting to destroy me, but I will ponder your statutes.”*

110 - *“The wicked have set a snare for me, but I have not strayed from your precepts.”*

121 - *“I have done what is righteous and just; do not leave me to my oppressors.”*

134 - *“Redeem me from human oppression, that I may obey your precepts.”*

139 - *“My zeal wears me out, for my enemies ignore your words.”*

143 - *“Trouble and distress have come upon me, but your commands give me delight.”*

146 - *“I call out to you; save me and I will keep your statutes.”*

153 - *“Look on my suffering and deliver me, for I have not forgotten your law.”*

154 - *“Defend my cause and redeem me; preserve my life according to your promise.”*

157 - *“Many are the foes who persecute me, but I have not turned from your statutes.”*

161 - *“Rulers persecute me without cause, but my heart trembles at your word.”*

169 - *“May my cry come before you, Lord; give me understanding according to your word.”*

Perhaps we can see ourselves and some of our concerns in these verses. And as we see written here the answer to each concern is to be found in God’s Word and the power of it.

Or perhaps we saw our Lord Jesus Christ in these words. The troubles He faced while here on earth as a man living among us. Reminding us of other verses in Scripture such as - *“Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.”* (Hebrews 5:8) or *“For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God,*

and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.” (Hebrews 2:17-18) and *“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”* (Hebrews 4:15-16)

And He, Christ Jesus our Lord, was victorious through the power of God’s Word as spoken of by the Prophet Isaiah long before He Jesus came to earth and walked among mankind. (Isaiah 53)

The following words are from a lady named Annie S. Hawks written around the year 1877.

‘One day as a young wife and mother of 37 years of age, I was busy with my regular household tasks. Suddenly, I became so filled with the sense of nearness to the Master that, wondering how one could live without Him, either in joy or pain, these words, “I Need Thee Every Hour,” were ushered into my mind, the thought at once taking full possession of me... I did not understand at first why this hymn had touched the great throbbing heart of humanity. It was not until long after, when the shadow fell over my way, the shadow of a great loss, that I understood something of the comforting power in the words which I had been permitted to give out to others in my hour of sweet serenity and peace.’

You may recognize her words which were put to music by her pastor.

*I need Thee every hour,
Most gracious Lord;
No tender voice like Thine
Can peace afford.*

*I need Thee, O I need Thee;
Every hour I need Thee;
O bless me now, my Savior,
I come to Thee.*

*I need Thee every hour,
Stay Thou nearby;
Temptations lose their power
When Thou art nigh.*

*I need Thee every hour,
In joy or pain;*

*Come quickly and abide,
Or life is vain.*

*I need Thee every hour;
Teach me Thy will;
And Thy rich promises
In me fulfill.*

*I need Thee every hour,
Most Holy One;
O make me Thine indeed,
Thou blessed Son.*

As the Psalmist stated here in Psalm 119 - at dawn, all day long, 7 times a day, in the night, through the watches of the night, and at midnight.

Let us be reminded - God is waiting to hear from us in prayer.
And God's is offering to speak to us through His Word. To impart true
Knowledge and wisdom to mankind. Are we listening?