

PSALMS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Psalm 119 as we continue our study through the Word of God and we finish up this Psalm this evening. As you remember, this Psalm is an acrostic. In these twenty-two sections of this Psalm, each section beginning with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet and all eight verses in that section have that same letter. Thus, this Psalm covers all twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet from Aleph onward.

Concerning this Psalm, C. S. Lewis made these remarks. He wrote,

The poem is not, and does not pretend to be, a sudden outpouring of the heart like, say Psalm 18. It is a pattern, a thing done like embroidery, stitch by stitch, through long, quiet hours, for love of the subject and for the delight in leisurely, disciplined craftsmanship.

- C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*, p. 52

I can't agree with him more. This is a wonderful and rich Psalm that focuses us on the Lord and His Word, that we can trust the Lord and His Word in all aspects of our lives. In fact, Samuel Ridout says that, "all the possibilities of human language are exhausted in setting forth the fullness and perfection of the Word of God." (*How to Study the Bible*, p. 73). Absolutely and thus, let's finish up this Psalm this evening as we pick up our study in Psalm 119, starting in verse 145 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

PSALM 119**VERSES 145-152**

1. The nineteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet is **Qof or Qoph ך**. Now as you read through this portion of the Psalm, what is the focus? It is not the enemies of the Psalmist. The focus is his prayer life that is dependent upon the Word of God. He trusted God's Word and He used God's Word as he prayed for the situations he was in. You see, during those sleepless nights, as he goes through difficult times, he does not stay awake and worry about what is happening to him, but he meditates on the Word of God, and the hopelessness of the situation turns to hope.

Boice put it like this as he wrote, "Yet these verses are not really about the psalmist's enemies, as bad as they were. They are about the writer's prayer life and how he learned to use God's word when praying."

2. We tend to think the way we pray; the length of our prayers, how elegant or sophisticated they are the more God will listen to them. In reality, the opposite is true. One writer put it like this, "God looks not at the elegance of your prayers, to see how neat they are; nor yet at the geometry of your prayers, to see how long they are; nor yet at the arithmetic of your prayers, to see how many they are; nor yet at the music of your prayers, nor yet at the sweetness of your voice, nor yet at the logic of your prayers; but at the sincerity of your prayers, how hearty they are." (Brooks, cited in Spurgeon). How true that is!

3. Now the problem comes when people don't want to hear God's Word, they don't want to apply God's Word to their lives. Why would they negate God's Word? Because they are enjoying the sin that they are doing more than the Lord and the Word of God will expose their sin, so they avoid it like the plague! But this life of sin is short-lived and the life that God has for you is abundant! Keep this in mind, "This book, the Bible, will keep you from sin and sin will keep you from this book!" Make no mistake about it, that is a fact!

4. Let's face it, we all go through difficult times, trying times, times that are testing our faith and we need to listen to what the Psalmist did here and apply these things to our lives. Let me give you several points that are made here. As you read this section, it is showing us,

- How he prayed (*with my whole heart*, 119:145)
- What he prayed for (*save me, and I will keep Your testimonies*, 119:146)
- When he prayed (*before the dawning of the morning*, 119:147)
- How long he prayed (*through the night watches*, 119:148)
- The grounds of his request (*according to Your lovingkindness . . . according to Your justice*, 119:149)
- How God answered his prayer (*You are near, O LORD*, 119:150)
- His testimony to answered prayer (*Your testimonies . . . You have founded them forever*, 119:152)

We see the Psalmist reaching out to God, crying out to God, using God's Word to pray and we see God answer his prayer by drawing near to the Psalmist. And isn't that exactly what we need as we go through these storms of life? Absolutely we do and I am thankful that He not only hears our hearts cry, but He answers them also!

VERSES 153-160

1. The twentieth letter of the Hebrew alphabet is **Resh** ר. As you go through your Christian life you will have easy times and tough times, I call them seasons. We are moving towards winter here in Wisconsin and when winter comes things are dry and lifeless. But winter gives way to spring where new life begins. From spring we move on to summer and in summer comes the bountiful harvest. And then comes the fall where things slow down. There may even be some pruning that is needed and then we move once again into winter. Remember we pass through these times, and as you do, don't lose focus of God and His Word. The Psalmist held true even during the dry and dark times, and so must we.

2. Now during those times God may seem distant, far away as it did with the Psalmist here. And what did he do? He cried out to God to "**Revive**" him and notice how that was going to be accomplished, "**according to your judgments**" or God's Word! How often Christians are seeking to be revived through a certain book they read, or a certain program they attend, or this or that and the Psalmist nails it because true revival in our lives begins and ends with the Word of God!

That tells me that a false revival is going to be based upon something other than God's Word and that is exactly what we see happening in the church today from the health, wealth and prosperity gospel to the Emerging Church, their revival is based on outward things, feelings, emotions and true revival is based upon the inward reality of God's Word filling our lives and overflowing in our actions! Don't lose sight of what God has given to us. Spurgeon made this point regarding God's Word and what we have. He wrote, "What a mighty plea is this – 'according to thy word.' No gun in all our arsenals can match it."

3. Now some may argue and say, "Why do we need God's Word? Can we trust God's Word?" And the Psalmist would say, "**The entirety of Your word is truth.**" God's entire Word is true! The Psalmist again declares the infallible character of the Word of God. The *entire* Word is true, not merely portions or the concepts from the Word. Not only is it true; it is *eternally* true. Thus, why go to something that is false and try to revive your dying heart? Go to God's Word and let Him bring revival to your life! Jesus said in Matthew 5:18, "**For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.**" May we believe it!

Spurgeon put it like this, “The Scriptures are as true in Genesis as in Revelation, and the five books of Moses are as inspired as the four Gospels . . . There is not one single mistake either in the word of God or in the providential dealings of God. Neither in the book of revelation nor of providence will there be any need to put a single note of errata [an error in printing or writing]. The Lord has nothing to regret or to retract, nothing to amend or to reverse.” May we not only believe it but apply it to our lives!

VERSES 161-168

1. The twenty-first letter of the Hebrew alphabet is **Shin ך**. In spite of all the turmoil that is around the Psalmist notice what his focus is upon. It is not upon the enemies or the troubles, but he stands in awe of God’s Word, his focus is the Word of God and it helps him to stand in the midst of trouble!

What about you, do you stand in awe of God’s Word? You should, we should! The Scriptures are so rich and deep that even in a lifetime we could not extract every rich nugget of truth from it. The Jews have a saying that when the Messiah comes He will not only interpret the Words, but also the spaces between the Words. To say that God’s Word is dry and dull is to say that God is dry and dull!

I like the way that Spurgeon puts this into perspective for us as he wrote, “He might have been overcome by awe of the princes had it not been that a greater fear drove out the less, and he was swayed by awe of God’s word. How little do crowns and scepters become in the judgment of that man who perceives a more majestic royalty in the commands of his God.”

You see, the Psalmist finds great peace as he rests in the Lord and His Word. It is as Psalm 112:7 says, **“He will not be afraid of evil tidings; His heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.”** And you will only be able to trust the Lord when you know who He is and you will know Him by reading His Word, believing His Word and applying His Word to your life. What did Paul say in Romans 10:17, **“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”** May we understand that our faith will grow as we read and apply God’s Word to our lives and thus, we can trust in Him!

Now, on the opposite end of the spectrum is the man who is anxious, his heart is unsettled and the reason that is true is because he does not *TRUST* in the Lord! If you can’t trust Him then you will be anxious, you will wonder what is going on, you will walk aimlessly without direction because you refuse to trust the Lord according to His Word!

2. Now in verse 164, where it says that, **“Seven times a day I praise You”** is that to be taken literally? Some feel that way but I tend to look at it like this. Seven is the number of completeness and his day is filled with praise unto God, it is complete you might say. Spurgeon makes this application for us as he wrote, “Do we praise God seven times a day? Do we praise him once in seven days?” You see, the more you know Him the more you will praise Him for all He has done, is doing and will do in your life. You will praise Him for who He is. But you will not know who He is unless you dig into His Word, His love letter you might say to us, the Word of God, the Bible!

VERSES 169-176

1. The twenty-second letter of the Hebrew alphabet is **Tav or Tau ת**. Notice that the Psalmists desire is not to just read God's Word, but to understand it. And not to just understand it through the wisdom of man, which is nothing, but to have God give to him understanding! And it is an understanding that is applied to his life's situations, the things he was going through!

Do you just read the Word of God or do you ask God to open your eyes to the truths He has for you? The Psalmist said in verse 18, "**Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law.**" God wants to give you understanding that is based on His Word, not outside His Word. Some like to say that God has given them new revelations, but if they contradict the Word of God, then they are not of God. I think one of the reasons many in the church today lack any kind of discernment is because they don't know the heart of God, which is found in His Word.

It is as the writer of Hebrews says in Hebrews 5:11-14, "**of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.**" If you don't know God's Word you are going to have a hard time distinguishing between right and wrong, good and evil.

But as you draw close to God, as you read and apply God's Word to your life, then this knowledge of God will lead to praise and adoration of the One who loves you so much, the Lord!

2. Now in verse 176 we see an honest confession by the Psalmist. He had strayed from the truth, but the Word of God, which he has treasured in his heart, will get him back on track and keep him moving in the right direction. You see, it was God's chastening that opened his eyes in the first place to his error as God sought out His servant, and the Psalmist responded by repenting and getting right with God. It is as he said in verses 67-68, **"Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word. You are good, and do good; Teach me Your statutes."**

God's chastening gets our attention, it shows us we are His children, and then we have a choice to make, to either listen, to heed His warning, or refuse to listen. If we refuse, He will continue to chasten us until we do listen, because He loves us and wants what is best for our life. As parents, that is how we deal with our children, not that we are trying to keep them from fun, but to protect them. How much more does God deal with us, and in a righteous way! Remember the words of Jesus in John 8:36, **"Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed."**

Do you want to be free? Then obey God's Word, apply it to your life. If you want to be in bondage, then you can do whatever you want but it is a dangerous and slippery road that leads to destruction, don't go down that path.

3. Let me give you a summary of these last eight verses of this Psalm because in this we see the Psalmist emphasize his great need for God and his dependence upon Him.

Something that we need to do in our own lives, learn to depend upon Him. And the interesting thing here is that the more you know God through His Word the more you will learn to depend upon Him. You will not become more independent but dependant and you will cry out to God for . . .

- Understanding (119:169)
- Deliverance (119:170)
- Ability to worship God rightly (119:171-172)
- Power to live an upright life (119:173-174)
- Strength to persevere (119:175)
- Restoration (Psalm 119:176)

Make no mistake about it; we need to be dependant upon God and that is exactly what the Psalmist has taught us throughout this Psalm, to depend upon God and His Word! Morgan put it like this, “The consciousness of need is revealed in each successive petition. Yet the song is never a wail of despair, because side by side with the sense of need, there is evident throughout a profound conviction of the sufficiency of the will of God.”

Our sufficiency must be in Christ as Paul said in II Corinthians 3:4-6, **“And we have such trust through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”** And in II Corinthians 9:8 Paul said, **“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.”** Our sufficiency must be in Christ and His Word, that God will guide us through His Word by His Spirit in all things that pertain to life and godliness!

4. Let me make this last point before we conclude this Psalm and move on. In a world that has moved away from the truths of God’s Word, this Psalm is a great reminder of how important the Word of God is to our lives. Never forget that. Let me end this Psalm with these words that Martin Luther expressed back in 1521 at the Diet of Worms. He said this.

“Since then Your Majesty and your lordships desire a simple reply, I will answer without horns and without teeth. Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason - I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other - my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen.”

Luther is saying that the Bible is our authority and that all human understanding, even that of the venerated Fathers of the church, must be evaluated by and reformed by the Bible. We would be wise to heed his words and cling to the Word of God! What a great Psalm this is as the Psalmist extols, lifts up God's Word, may we do no less!

5. As we move into the next 15 Psalms, Psalms 120-134, they are called Songs of Ascents. The reason for that is that these Psalms were sung as the Jew's made their pilgrimage to Jerusalem. You see, the Jewish Law required every able adult male Jew, within 15 miles of the city of Jerusalem, to come to the temple for 3 main feasts a year. In the spring, it was the feast of Passover. In the summer, it was the feast of Pentecost. And in the fall, it was the feast of Tabernacles. Now, of course, many came for the other feasts also and from farther away, but these 3 feasts they were required to come for.

Now why are they called The Songs of Ascents? Because no matter which way you came to Jerusalem, your final journey will be upward, for Jerusalem sits some 2,600 feet above sea level. Thus, as you hit the 3 valleys that surround the city of Jerusalem, you would then begin to make your final ascent. And what an emotional experience it must have been. Just riding up to Jerusalem on our tour when we were in Israel was exciting. And as tired as we were, you could just sense the joy of coming to this land where God has placed His name upon.

Remember in Luke chapter 2 we see Joseph, Mary and Jesus make their pilgrimage to the city of Jerusalem for the feast of Passover. Jesus was 12 years old at this time. And Joseph gives us some insight of how overflowing this city was during the feasts days, for he tells us that the population swelled to well over 1 million people.

Now when the feasts days were over, Joseph and his family headed home, with the caravan of other people leaving the city to return home also. And as they are traveling they don't realize that their son, Jesus, is not with them, and they have been traveling for about a day's journey or about 20 miles. And as Joseph and Mary headed back to the city of Jerusalem they found Jesus in the Temple listening to what the religious teachers were saying and astonishing them with His knowledge of the Scriptures. And as they found Jesus in the Temple, Mary said to Him, "... 'Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously.' And He said to them, 'Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?'"

Luke 2:48-49. Jesus was not being a smart guy, He was just being honest!

Now in these 15 Psalms of ascents, 4 are ascribed to David, (122, 124, 131, 133), 1 to Solomon (127), and 10 are anonymous. And as we begin reading these Psalms, picture in your mind going on a pilgrimage to the holy city, with a large group of people, singing these songs as you get closer and closer to the city. You can just see the emotional climax they must have reached as they began their final ascent, first seeing the mountains surrounding Jerusalem, then seeing the city itself, and finally seeing with their eyes the Temple of God!

PSALM 120

Psalm 120 is a Psalm that is seeking deliverance from the enemy, from evil people as this pilgrim lived in their midst, lived among a people that were just as bad as the Gentiles you might say! It is the cry of a person living amongst evil, longing for the peace found in the holy city of God, longing to worship the Lord at the Temple. So let's see what we can glean from this Psalm.

VERSES 1-2

1. Wherever the Psalmist is living he feels like he is surrounded by evil people. And we can see that his cry is to be delivered from this situation. He longs to go up to Jerusalem and leave this all behind him. And as we read on we will see where he is living and truly what is troubling him.

VERSES 3-4

1. What we see here is that the Psalmist is speaking of judgment coming upon them for their deceitful actions. The arrows speak of piercing and the broom tree was used for firewood, for it burned long and hot! God's judgment will pierce those who have rejected Him and they will feel the heat of His fire of judgment for our God is a consuming fire!

VERSES 5-7

1. Meshech was an area to the far north and Kedar to the south, in Northern Arabia. And the point the Psalmist was making is he felt that his home, the people that surrounded him, were just as evil as the pagans living in Meshech and Kedar! Think about that for a minute. What surrounds us today in this country? We are a nation that is open about our sin, about our immorality. We are a nation that calls good evil and evil good. And our hearts cry is not only to be delivered from this wickedness but also for a time when peace will fill this land. And that is only going to happen when the Prince of Peace comes and sets up His throne in Jerusalem and rules and reigns as King!

2. That is what the last two verses are about. Those that don't know the Lord are looking for war, a battle against those who stand with God. And the Psalmist is longing for peace to fill the land, not war. I think all of us feel the same way. But there is a peace that is from the world which is empty, and a peace that is from God which is eternal. Paul said of the world's peace in I Thessalonians 5:3, **“For when they say, ‘Peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.”**

This is a false peace, but that is all the world has to offer us. Paul tells us that Jesus, **“... is our peace ...”** Ephesians 2:14. You see, as Christians we have peace ***WITH*** God through Jesus Christ, which allows us to have the peace ***OF*** God to fill our hearts and our lives. And one day that peace will fill this land as the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, returns to set up His Kingdom here on earth.

You see, we are tired of living with all this evil around us and we too long to go to Jerusalem where there will be peace because there is where the King, where Jesus will reside one day and that day is getting closer!

PSALM 121

As they made their ascent up to Jerusalem, the journey was dangerous. It took you through dangerous areas, and the Psalmist is looking to the Lord for protection as he now sees the hills that surround the city of Jerusalem come into view. And I'm sure his heart began to beat a little faster, realizing his journey was almost over.

VERSES 1-2

1. As some read this they come to the foolish conclusion that the Psalmist is looking to the hills, the mountains for his help in the situation that he was facing. Really, have mountains any power to help? No, so there must be more to this than that kind of thinking and there truly is.

The Psalmist is not saying that his help is coming from the hills or mountains but within the shadow of those hills sits the city of Jerusalem and the Temple of God, his destination. Thus, his help is from the Lord, the one he is on a pilgrimage to worship. And to make the point once again, we are told in Jeremiah 3:23, “**Truly, in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, And from the multitude of mountains; Truly, in the LORD our God Is the salvation of Israel.**” Yes this was a dangerous journey, but he had the right perspective of the situation. Nothing is too hard for the creator of heaven and earth; he will see this pilgrim home!

2. Have you ever played hockey or football and just been run over by someone? And maybe it happened several times and maybe in just one game! What about your team, they were there to protect you, what happened? Several times they did not come to your side. Folk’s, in this game of life you might say, we can try to do things in the power of our might, we can try to do things with the help of others, but in the end, we will be run over! It is the Lord who is our strength; He alone is the One who will see us through these situations we face.

The problem for us is we can easily let our problems overwhelm us, and in God’s eyes they are nothing. You see, I can block out the sun, which is some 865,000 miles in diameter, with something as small as my fist, by placing my fist up to my eyes. We can also place our problems so close to our eyes that we block out the Son of God, we block out the Lord, the only one who can truly help us and give us hope. Do what the Psalmist did if you are struggling in this area. Take a couple of steps back, and get a proper perspective of the situation. Focus back on the Lord and don’t let life run you over!

3. Now these first two verses are from the perspective of the Psalmist. Starting in verse 3 and onward I think it is the Holy Spirit who is speaking and showing us, telling us about what the Lord will do. He will show us how we are eternally secure in Christ because we have the guarantee of the Holy Spirit! That is what Paul said in Ephesians 1:13-14, **“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”**

Paul tells us that we have been **“sealed”** in the Holy Spirit, SPHRAGIZO, (sfrag-id’-zo) in the Greek and it speaks of sealing up, preservation. The moment we believe in Christ we are sealed instantaneously by the Holy Spirit, we are the property of the King of kings and Lord of lords! You see, the seal signifies several things for us:

➤ ***SECURITY AND PROTECTION BY GOD***

It is a total and absolute security that could only be broken by someone with greater power than has made the seal. Pilate set a seal upon the tomb of Jesus and that seal was broken by Jesus, He had greater power than Pilate, He is God and thus, as He rose from the dead the stone was rolled away, placed in another place and that seal was broken! No one can break the seal that God has placed upon us!

➤ *OWNERSHIP*

When we are sealed by God it is a completed transaction, He will not return us. We are His! I know with Christmas we see a lot of gifts returned, God does not do that! Paul put it this way in I Corinthians 6:19-20, **“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.”**

➤ *AUTHENTICITY*

Having the Spirit of God in our lives shows that we are authentic in our walk, we are real. You see, the fruit of the Spirit will be produced in our lives and without being saved; you can in no way produce the fruit of the Spirit in your life!

➤ *DELEGATED AUTHORITY*

We can go directly to God and speak to Him and He will speak to us. We are told in John 16:23, **“And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.”** Also, notice what Paul tells us in Hebrews 4:16, **“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”** We don't need to go through anyone else for we have access to the throne of God because we are His children!

Thus, when the Holy Spirit seals us it shows that we are secure in Christ, we are His possession, we are real and we have the ability to go before God. But it does not end there.

Paul says that the Holy Spirit is our “**guarantee of our inheritance**” and the word that Paul uses for “**guarantee**” in the Greek is ARRHABON (ar-hrab-ohn’) and it speaks of “purchase-money or property given in advance as a security for the rest” or earnest money. That tells me that the Lord is coming back and the Holy Spirit is the earnest money telling me this truth.

Also, think of it as an engagement ring, the Holy Spirit that is, and the Lord has given to us this ring, the Holy Spirit because we are His Bride, the church. That again tells me He is coming back to receive His bride, the church one day and thus, we should be looking for Him, watching and waiting for that day when He comes back for us! Paul, in II Corinthians 1:21-22 tells us, “**Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.**” Again, in II Corinthians 5:5 we are told, “**Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.**”

Thus, when He comes we will be received up into glory with Him and we call this the rapture of the church where the Lord meets us in the air, receives His bride and you can read of this in I Thessalonians chapter 4.

Then comes the marriage supper of the Lamb spoken of in Revelation 19:5-9, where we are told, **“Then a voice came from the throne, saying, ‘Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!’ And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, ‘Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.’ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, ‘Write: “Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!”” And he said to me, ‘These are the true sayings of God.’”** We wait for that day!

So keep that in mind as we read through these next several verses, that the Holy Spirit is speaking to us and showing us the security that we have in God, in Christ!

VERSES 3-4

1. Look at the picture that the Holy Spirit is painting for us here. As they journeyed on they became tired and had to rest. But again, danger surrounded them on this journey. Thus, they were only able to rest in the Lord, for His eyes were continually upon them, watching over them. What a comfort that was and that comfort came from a proper perspective of the situation. It is as David said in Psalm 3:5-6, **“I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the LORD sustained me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people Who have set themselves against me all around.”** You can put your trust in the Lord.

2. We too are on a spiritual journey you might say. And like the Psalmist, can we rest in the protection of our Lord knowing that He does not sleep or slumber but He is watching over us continually? I hope we can because that is what the Holy Spirit is saying to us. We truly have nothing to fear because the Lord is for us and if He is for us who can be against us? That is a rhetorical question, no one can be against us because God will not let anything come upon us without His approval and whatever He approves, He will give us the strength to go through those valleys of death you might say to get to the mountaintop!

VERSES 5-8

1. Now this is interesting to me. Why is the Lord shade for only the right side or the right hand? Doesn't He care for all of us, even our left side? Of course He does. The reason is simple. It is because you would hold your shield in your left hand, protecting your left side, and your sword in your right hand, which left you unprotected on that right side. So what the Psalmist is saying is the Lord will protect our vulnerable areas, for He is our protector. I like that don't you!

2. Also, traveling during the day left you exposed to the elements, and the sun's temperatures could dehydrate you very quickly. But the Psalmist is saying that God will shade us from the heat of the day, just as He will shelter us from the heat of everyday living. Once again I like that, don't you!

3. He goes on to speak of the moon, and really, what harm could the moon cause? We don't believe in werewolves, do we? Of course not! But I do have to say, when I worked at the hospital when there was a full moon, it would seem that all the creatures of the night would come out, the more bizarre the more they came out!

But that is not what the Psalmist is speaking of is it? Well, they believed that if you slept under a full moon, you would go crazy. So I guess maybe it is! And we can see this in the word "lunatic" which comes from the Latin word "luna" or moon. Again, I can't prove this scientifically, but like I have said, I do know this through my experiences from being a Registered Nurse. When the moon is full you can expect every nut case to come through the Emergency Room door, and the ICU you can count on going crazy. In fact, we used to joke around that on the nights when our patients just seem to go nuts, we would say "It must be a full moon!" And you know what, it usually was! Now the point that the Psalmist is making is that the God who never sleeps or slumbers will watch over you and protect you both day and night, even when the nuts are out I guess! I once again like that, don't you!

4. And if that is not enough, he concludes this Psalm saying that God will preserve His people forevermore! And what a precious promise that was for those making this dangerous pilgrimage. For us as Christians, we too are on a pilgrimage, and the journey is dangerous as we walk through this world, but God will protect us. It is as Jude 24-25 says, **“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.”**

Now I do believe we understand these truths but do we believe them to the point of living them out? You may have heard of the story of the man who was trying to cross a frozen lake. He was not sure it was safe so he got down on his hands and knees and began to tap on the ice to make sure it was solid. Once he was secure, he would move a little farther out on this lake, crawling on his hands and knees. Then he would tap some more and if it was safe he would move on, crawling on his hands and knees out farther! He kept repeating this over and over and it took him hours to make it across that lake.

By the time he was close to the other side he was frozen. His face was blue, his knuckles were bright red. It was all he could do to move a little farther to get to the edge and to the land. And as he was getting there he heard this loud noise. To his surprise, as he turned around to look, were twelve Clydesdale horses that were pulling a heavy wagon across the lake! They made it across that lake in just a few minutes while it took this man a few hours! And as this man watched them go by he realized how foolish he was!

Don't we do that very thing in life? Of course we do! "I hope I am going to make it!" And there is a tap, tap, tap and we move a little farther! "I wonder if God is going to continue to work in my life?" Tap, tap, tap and we move a little farther along! Doubt and discouragement is the double edged sword that the enemy loves to use against us!

Didn't the Lord promise to never leave us? Absolutely he did! What if the ice cracks, what if I begin to sink? Do you think He is going to let you sink? No He is not, He will pick you up and you will continue walking, not crawling! You see, having the correct perspective changes everything and we need to get refocused on the Lord.

Remember what Paul said in Philippians 1:6, "**being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.**" He will complete the work; there is nothing we need to fear. We need to trust in the Lord, this is not our home, we are just passing through!

Let me close with these words from Paul in Philippians 3:20-21, "**For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.**"

Here's the thing. Our glorification is not "maybe" or "might be" or "I think so" but it is a done deal for we are citizens of heaven because we have been adopted into the family of God through Christ! One paraphrase reads this verse like this, "**We have our home in heaven, and here on earth we are a colony of heaven's citizens.**" May we never forget that fact, that this is not our home, we are aliens and strangers in this land, we are just passing through and one day we will be home with our Lord!

When the Lord returns for His Bride, the Church, what is He going to do? Paul tells us, “**who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.**” He is going to “**transform**” METASCHEMATIZO, (met-askh-ay-mat-id'-zo) in the Greek, and it speaks of, to “change the outward form of” our bodies and they will be like His glorified body or “identical in essential character.” He is speaking of our glorified body we will receive! Our *SALVATION*, *SANCTIFICATION*, and *GLORIFICATION* are seen in the working of Christ in our lives!

Listen to how these verses read from The Living Bible, “**But our homeland is in heaven, where our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, is; and we are looking forward to his return from there. When he comes back, he will take these dying bodies of ours and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same mighty power that he will use to conquer all else everywhere.**” Philippians 3:20-21. Praise the Lord for the work He not only has begun in us but that He will also complete it!

It is as the Psalmist concluded, “**The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in From this time forth, and even forevermore.**” Psalm 121:8. May we not forget that or lose sight of that truth!