



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Book of Psalms

Psalm 119 (Part 10)

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Introduction

- This is part 10 of Psalm 119 which includes the 19th and the 20th sections, or Hebrews letters Koph, or (Qoph) and Resh, verses 145-160
- Koph is the 19th letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and it is used at the beginning of verbs in verses, 145-152
- So, the first word in each verse begins with the letter Koph
- This section of Psalm 119 is an excellent example of prayer that we can apply to our own Christian life
- The rule of the psalmist's life is the unceasing prayer to be kept faithful in the midst of unfaithfulness



Introduction

- In this passage the psalmist is in prayer, and we are given a glimpse into how he prayed, why he prayed, when he prayed, how long he prayed, and what his prayers were about
- But most of all we learn about the important interconnection between prayer and God's Word
- This part of the Psalm also teach us that we have personal access to the only One who knows everything, sees everything, and has the power and ability to solve every problem and situation that we face



Introduction

- Part 20th of this Psalm is verses 153-160 in which each verse begins with the letter Resh
- In this section the psalmist seems to draw still nearer to God in prayer, and to state his case and to beseech the divine help with more of boldness and expectation
- There are eight requests, pleas, and petitions for divine assistance
- One of these requests is repeated three times, over and over again the psalmist asks God to *revive* him
- This part of the Psalm reveals the fight to remain faithful in a hostile world



Introduction

General Outline

- Koph: A Cry and Prayer to God 119-145-152
- Resh: Revival According to the Word of God 119:153-160

A Cry and Prayer to God

119-145-152



- Prayer is often expressed by *crying*; which sometimes signifies mental, and sometimes vocal prayer; and generally supposes the person praying to be in distress, either outward or inward
- The psalmist's prayer here was hearty from his *whole heart*
- It was not with his mouth and lips only, but with his *heart* also
- His whole soul pleaded with God, his entire affections, his united desires all went out towards the living God
- The psalmist pleaded with God, crying out before Him and he did it earnestly, fervently
- In his pleading, he wanted to *keep* the word of God

A Cry and Prayer to God

119-145-152



- This was not merely a cry for help or deliverance or forgiveness; this was a cry for obedience
- He is not praying for wealth or health or even happiness
- The genuineness and earnestness of his prayer is affirmed in his pledge: *I will keep Your statutes*
- The psalmist's prayers drove him to God's Word
- A passion for prayer and a passion for the Word of God should always go together
- David has been truly a man of prayer, who knew how to raise his prayer, for heaven to respond

A Cry and Prayer to God 119-145-152



- St. Augustine says, “For to what end his cry profits, he adds: ‘*I will keep Your statutes.*’ For this purpose then he has called with his whole heart, and has longed that this might be given him by the Lord listening unto him, that he may search out His righteousness.”
- Verse 146 restates and reinforces verse 145
- In his distress he cried and prayed to the Lord
- This was a principal and leading petition, that He would *save* him out of all his troubles and afflictions, and out of the hands of all his enemies; and with a temporal, spiritual, and eternal salvation which he knew God was able to do

A Cry and Prayer to God 119-145-152



- It is out of the psalmist's desire and dedication that he comes to God
- His desire is to obey God's Word because of relationship and devotion, not duty
- His prayer was short but complete
- *I will keep Your testimonies*, This was his great object in desiring salvation, that he might be able to continue in a blameless life of obedience to God
- The psalmist passionately depended on God and His word, but that did not eliminate his participation in any way, *I rise before the dawning of the morning*

A Cry and Prayer to God 119-145-152



- The psalmist shares how he commits to God and His word
- He does not leave his promises empty but backs them up with disciplined commitment
- He still woke early to seek God, in prayer, *cry for help* that was helped by God's word, *I hope in Your word*
- The psalmist was early as well as earnest in his supplications to God; Psalm 5:3
- He began the day with God and the first thing he did in the morning was to pray

A Cry and Prayer to God

119-145-152



- As Jesus Christ rose early in the morning, a great while before day, and went out to a solitary place, and prayed, Mark 1:35
- Hope in God's word encouraged him to continue persistent in prayer
- The psalmist knew that he who is diligent in prayer will never be destitute of hope
- *the night watches*, The Jews divided the night into three watches, which began at what we now call six o'clock in the evening, and consisted each of four hours
- The Romans afterward introduced among them the custom of dividing it into four watches, consisting of three hours each

A Cry and Prayer to God

119-145-152



- The psalmist anticipated these regular divisions of the night in order that he might engage in prayer
- Instead of waiting for their return, he arose for prayer before they recurred - so much did his heart delight in the service of God
- He began the day with prayer, and he continued in prayer through the watches of the day, and the watches of the night
- He not only woke early to seek God, he also stayed awake *through the night* to think about God and His *word*
- Meditation was the food of his hope, his thoughts were on the *word* which he continually mentions, and in which his heart rejoices

A Cry and Prayer to God 119-145-152



- The psalmist asked for God to *hear* him *according to* the goodness and mercy *lovingkindness* of God
- He does not plead his own worthiness, or his merit but *according to Your lovingkindness*
- When God hears prayer according to His *lovingkindness*, He overlooks all the imperfections of the person who prays, He forgets the sinfulness of the person who offer it, and in merciful love He grants the desire though the suppliant be unworthy
- He also asked God to *revive* him *according to* the *justice* of God
- Both are reasons to pray and to have confidence in pleading them

A Cry and Prayer to God 119-145-152



- The psalmist encourages himself to hope that he shall obtain his request because he depends upon God's *lovingkindness* and upon God's *judgment*
- Knowing that God is good, he is sure that He will be good to him, who hope in His mercy
- The psalmist first cried, *Save me*; then, *Hear me*; and now, *revive me*
- The scholar Origen says, “I do not seek from You to revive me according to my behavior, namely, to my self-righteousness, but according to Your justice. In other words, Revive me by whichever way You intend for me to live.”

A Cry and Prayer to God 119-145-152



- St. Augustine says, “For first God according to His loving-mercy takes away punishment from sinners, and will give them life afterwards, when righteous, according to His judgment; for it is not without a meaning that it is said unto Him, ‘I will sing of mercy and justice; To You, O Lord;’ in this order of the terms: although the season of mercy itself be not without judgment ... And the final season of judgment shall not be without mercy ... But ‘judgment shall be without mercy, but ‘unto those’ on the left, ‘who have not dealt mercy.’”

A Cry and Prayer to God 119-145-152



- The prayer of verse 149 anticipates the distressing situation of verse 150
- Evil persecutions are closing in; their intentions are evil and unjust
- The psalmist could sense that the wicked who opposed him were coming closer and becoming more of a threat to him
- He appeals to God, on the basis of His justice because his enemies are too numerous and powerful for him, but they are not too many and too strong for God
- Though they came closer to the psalmist, they were *far* from God's word

A Cry and Prayer to God 119-145-152



- Those who keep God's *law* and commandments neither do harm to themselves nor to others
- Hearing the footsteps of those who chased him to do him harm, the psalmist put himself in the hands of God, and entreated Him to interfere, for they hated him on account of that, they went far from the law of God; as though their hate for him is hate for God Himself
- As they hate him because they hate God and His Word
- These things always go together, and Jesus addressed this reality at some length in John 15:18-25

A Cry and Prayer to God 119-145-152



- *You are near, O Lord*: Though the wicked were both near to the Psalmist and far from God's word, the Psalmist knew that God was *near*
- God was present with him; He was ready to hear his cry; He was at hand to save him, "*If God is for us, who can be against us?*" (Romans 8:31)
- It should greatly comfort all the godly to remember that their enemies are God's enemies also
- Because God came *near* to the psalmist, he could see clearly that *all God's commandments are truth*

A Cry and Prayer to God 119-145-152



- He understood that God's word was truly inspired and infallible
- He was experiencing the truth of what God had assured him of
- If all God's commands are truth, then the godly man will be glad to keep near to them, and therein he will find the true God near him
- Not a doubt came into the psalmist mind - for God was near him
- The psalmist had an *old* relationship with the word of God
- The study of God's commandments has long ago convinced the psalmist that they are no passing or temporary, but eternal laws, decreed and laid down forever

A Cry and Prayer to God

119-145-152



- The psalmist has long ago learnt the eternal validity of God's *testimonies*; and his deeply rooted convictions cannot be shaken by the contempt or the threats of his enemies
- The more he studied and meditated upon them, the more he understood their divine origin
- Every promise is a testimony of God's own purpose in regard to mankind
- The promises are *founded forever*, so that "*Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.*" (Luke 21:33)

A Cry and Prayer to God 119-145-152



- The scholar Origen says, “If God has founded those testimonies, they anticipate what would be built on them. On that foundation, God builds His precepts, statutes, commandments, judgments, wisdom, and knowledge. That would make the building absolute and perfect in every aspect ... to become worthy ‘for God to dwell in it ...’ (2 Corinthians 6:16; Leviticus 26:12)”

Revival According to the Word of God 119:153-160



- Once again, the psalmist is focusing on his need for deliverance and saving from those who oppress him
- He appeals to the Lord's compassion and begs Him to look down upon him and *consider the afflictions* that he has been enduring
- He's asking God to not just notice but do something about his *affliction*
- God will not simply visually observe; He will act
- To plead for God to *consider* his *affliction* is to ask God to act
- The Lord seems as if He did not, when He does not grant His gracious presence to His people

Revival According to the Word of God 119:153-160



- Or does not arise to their help and deliverance so soon as they desire and expect
- But He always sees and beholds their afflictions; He cannot do otherwise, since He is the omniscient God
- He looks upon His people with an eye of mercy and compassion, which is what is here prayed for
- In the lives of some, *affliction* drives them away from God and His word
- For the psalmist, such troubled times drove him closer to God and His word

Revival According to the Word of God 119:153-160



- The adversaries have most certainly *forgotten* God's words (v. 139) and as a result are very far away from His *law*
- The psalmist is not one of them; he belongs to God and as His child he is desperate for rescue
- *Plead my cause*, This shows that his *affliction* was chiefly from men, wicked and ungodly
- His *cause* was a good one, and therefore he puts it into the hand of the Lord, and who otherwise would not have undertaken it
- He presents the dispute between him and his persecutors as a lawsuit and asks God to be his advocate and to defend him as a lawyer might do

Revival According to the Word of God 119:153-160



- The psalmist looked for help and salvation outside of himself
- This reinforces the idea that his previous claims to righteousness were not absolute, and were made comparing himself to other men, ungodly men
- He knew that he needed God to *plead* his *cause*; he knew he needed God to *redeem* him
- The psalmist wanted to be made alive, *Revive*, and to have that life brought to him *according to* God's word
- Life is repeatedly promised as the reward of obedience to the law of God, Deuteronomy 8:3,30:6,15,19-20,32:47

Revival According to the Word of God 119:153-160



- The word of God is a source of revival
- If we will read the word of God and do what it tells us to do – in prayer, in repentance, in dedication, and in pursuing God with the whole heart – it will be a source of revival
- The psalmist understood that the wicked would not be saved
- He understood that their wickedness was rooted in their refusal to seek God through His word, *they do not seek Your statutes*
- If the believer, by his humility and obedience, enjoys fellowship with his Savior; the wicked, by his pride, and his disobedience, or his rejection of God's commandments, deprives himself of the enjoyment of that fellowship, and its spiritual fruit in his life

Revival According to the Word of God 119:153-160



- As St. Paul later stated, *“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand... those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”* (Galatians 5:19-21)
- *Salvation is far from the wicked.* It cannot be otherwise when as God is neither in their heads (Psalm 10:4), nor in their hearts (Psalm 14:1)
- When *they do not seek Your statutes*, they will not find

Revival According to the Word of God 119:153-160



- The wicked are *far from salvation* because *they do not seek* God
- Though the wicked are far from *salvation* and far from God's word, the *tender mercies* of God are close to all who will seek them
- Though the salvation of God is *far* from them, God is not far because of His *tender mercies*
- God's *mercies* are *tender*, for He is full of compassion
- They are many, they are great, a fountain that can never be exhausted
- He is rich in mercy to all that call upon Him

Revival According to the Word of God 119:153-160



- *Revive me according to Your judgments:* This is the same thought repeated from v. 154
- The psalmist is emphasizing in the two verses that God's word is both a source and a measure of revival
- By this, the psalmist indirectly rebukes the wicked, presenting his own experiences of receiving the tender mercies of God, which granted him life
- St. Augustine says, "*Revive me according to Your judgments, For I know that Your judgments will not be upon me without Your mercy.*"

Revival According to the Word of God 119:153-160



- *Many are my persecutors and my enemies*, The thought here turns on the number of his enemies, and on the effect which numbers might have in turning one from the way of truth
- Because they were his enemies, they hated him, because of his obedience to God, and on that account persecuted him
- The presence of so many *persecutors* and *enemies* did not make the psalmist despair or doubt the love of God for him
- He did not have the expectation that a godly life was a problem-free life
- Instead, he was determined to keep turned to and focused on the word of God

Revival According to the Word of God 119:153-160



- David, being a public person, had many enemies
- In this he was a type both of Christ and of His church
- And this has always been the portion and case of God's people in all ages
- St. Augustine says, “That is what we realize, know, and remember: The whole earth became red by the blood of the martyrs. Heavens flourish by the crowns of the martyrs. The churches are adorned by the memories of the martyrs. The seasons are distinguished by the birthdays of the martyrs. Many healings are realized through the worthiness of the martyrs.”

Revival According to the Word of God 119:153-160



- It was not that the psalmist expected godly behavior from the ungodly – something that St. Paul warned about (1 Corinthians 5:9-13)
- He felt *disgusted* and could not endure them because God and His word were being dishonored
- *the treacherous*, Transgressors of the law of God, blasphemous sinners
- It grieved him when he saw and watched their wicked life and conversation; as Lot in Sodom; and Isaiah and Jeremiah, among people of unclean lips

Revival According to the Word of God 119:153-160



- He was grieved, not because they were hurtful to him, but because they dishonored God and served Satan
- Some interpret *the treacherous* as traitors, or apostates
- They are those who pretend, they profess God with their lips and deny Him with their deeds
- *Consider how I love Your precepts*, A second time he asks for consideration
- This is the confident appeal of one who was conscious that he was truly attached to God; that he really loved His law
- God's people ought to have such love for His law that they could affirm this without hesitation or doubt

Revival According to the Word of God 119:153-160



- The psalmist asked God to look at his love for His word, but then asked for revival on the basis of God's *lovingkindness* instead of on his own merit
- He does not say, *Consider how I fulfil Your precepts*; he was conscious to himself that in many things he came short; but he says, *Consider how I love Your precepts*
- He loved God's *precepts*, so as to be grieved with those who did not love them
- Revival is never deserved or earned, but given from the *lovingkindness* of God

Revival According to the Word of God 119:153-160



- *Revive me*, The psalmist had repeated his prayer, this urged petition, nine times, (vv. 25, 37, 40, 88, 107, 149, 154, 156, and 159) and it was not a "vain repetition," or an empty sound
- Each time it was renewed with abundant faith, intense feeling of his necessity, and the strength of most eager affection
- The comfort of a Christian militant, in this body of sin, is rather in the sincerity of his love than in the absolute perfection of his actions
- The psalmist finishes up this section in the same way as the last by dwelling upon the firm belief of the truth of God

Revival According to the Word of God 119:153-160



- *Your word is truth*, The psalmist again declares the infallible character of the word of God
- After examining the Divine Word, and estimating the value of its several parts, the psalmist found that the *entirety of Your word is truth*, absolute *truth*
- The *entire* word is true, not merely portions or individual concepts from the word; the Holy Scriptures are as true in Genesis as in Revelation and not only is it true; it is *eternally* true
- All God's judgments, decrees, commands, and purposes are righteous, and as righteous things are lasting and *endures forever*

Discussion



- What does the psalmist wish to do here instead of sleeping through the night?
- Why is it so important to hope in God's Word?
- How can God be both merciful and just in our salvation?
- Where is the enemy, the believer, and God in proximate location to each other?



Discussion

- What were the psalmist's expectations in the midst of real and present danger?
- What are the two possible relationships a man may have with God?
- Why is salvation so very far away from the wicked?
- What is the final act of God's revival in our lives?

Discussion



- What is the psalmist's emotional reaction to the wicked?
- What is the difference between a righteous judgment and an application to God's laws? Provide several examples.
- Why does it appear that this psalmist may be a leader of some kind?