

PSALM 119: THE PSALM OF THE BIBLE

Stanza #1

Today we begin a new study in the longest chapter of the Bible – Psalm 119. Each week we will look at a section of eight verses known as “stanzas”. This chapter contains 176 verses, which equal 22 sections of eight verses. This Psalm is an “acrostic” Psalm, which means that each of the 22 sections correspond with a letter in the Hebrew alphabet. The first word of each verse starts with the letter of the Hebrew alphabet that introduces the stanza. As each stanza is broken down into eight sections, we also find eight different words that describe the Word of God. The word “*Law*” comes from the verb “to teach”, which emphasizes that God is teaching us what His word requires of us. The word “*Testimonies*” refer to what God has testified about Himself and His will. The word “*Precepts*” refer to instructions from a superior regarding the duties of those under him. The word “*Statutes*” is related to a verb, meaning to “engrave”. The word implies permanent and unchangeable regulations. The word “*Commandments*” is a word assuming the authority of a commander, and the inherent necessity of obeying the content of the charge. The word “*Judgments*” refer to decisions that God has made as a judge in order to make earthly behavior conform to His heavenly standard. The word “*Word*” (Hebrew *dabar*), is an all-embracing term for God’s revelation in any form. Another word “*Word*” (Hebrew *imra*) seems to refer to promises, and also has the idea of words coming from the very mouth of God. Other words that also seem to speak of God’s Word are, “ways, name and faithfulness”. It is clear from all of these words that Psalm 119 is rightly known as, the “Psalm of the Bible”. With that, let’s begin with Stanza #1:

1. **The ways of blessedness – Psalm 119:1-3** -. Many people, even unsaved people talk about being “blessed”, but are they really being blessed in a Biblical sense? The ways of blessedness are spelled out in the Bible. In these opening verses, we see several ways to be genuinely blessed by God. In this first verse, we see blessing coming as a result of what we are and what we do – vs. 1 -. Blessings come to those who are “undefiled” in the way. The word “are” refers to an accomplished fact. Blessings come to those who have become in the life “undefiled”, or blameless “in the way”. The “way” being the journey of the Christian life. While we will never be sinless, we should strive to be “blameless”. For the believer who has arrived at a point in his Christian life, where he is blameless in his daily life, then blessings will naturally flow from God. Blessedness also comes as a result of what we do – “who walk in the law of the Lord”. We find the same theme in verse two – “Blessed are they that **keep** His testimonies”. Not only do we receive blessings for what we are, but also for what we do. If we purpose to walk in and follow the commandments of the Lord, then blessings will naturally follow. If we want to be blessed in the abundance that God desires, we must walk in ways that please the Lord. Unsaved people and rebellious Christians can never enjoy the full blessings of God. They may enjoy some facets of life, but they will miss out on the fullness of the blessings of God. Another means of blessing is found in a heart that is devoted to pleasing God – vs. 2 – “and that seek Him with the whole heart”. A Christian who has decided in his heart to seek after and follow the things that please God, will also enjoy the blessings of God. The whole heart means just that. Anything that has more devotion in our heart to God is a divided heart, and will miss out on the fullness of God’s blessings. Unsaved people and rebellious Christians always have hearts that are seeking other things, and as a result do not enjoy the blessings of God. When it comes to blessings, do not look at your life and interpret good things happening as God’s blessings. Many people can make good things happen without God being involved. If a person is not living God’s way, they do not have His blessings.

It is dangerous and a false sense of security to apply the blessings of God where they do not belong. Notice also verse 3. The opening phrase does not mean sinless perfection, it simply means one who is living a righteous life before God. It refers to a Christian who is not walking in , but in the ways of God. The Christian who desires God’s blessings will have them if they live a life that is righteous before the Lord, and in the absence of sin, walks in the ways of the Lord.

2. **God’s command concerning His precepts – vs. 4 -**. Notice five important things about this verse, The Source – God. All that we find in this verse comes from God. We see secondly – the command. God is about to command, not suggest something in this verse. The third thing is the direction of the command - “us”. The fourth thing is the subject of His command – “precepts”. The fifth thing to notice is God’s expectation of us in regards to this command – “diligently”. Putting it all together, we find that God has commanded us to keep His precepts diligently. God wants us to live out His unchangeable truths in our lives with every fiber of being that we have. Sadly today, we live out God’s commands if we want to, if they don’t interfere with our lives, if society doesn’t disagree and if we have determined how much benefit it is to do so. God has commanded our diligence in keeping His precepts. A refusal of this diligence is equal to rebellion against His laws. Not only will blessing not abound, but judgment will be found, and consequences suffered as a result. Remember God commands our diligence.
3. **The desire of the blessed believer – vs. 5-6 -**. This fifth verse is a lament. The writer is lamenting the fact he doesn’t always keep God’s statutes. This lament reveals a believer whose heart desires obedience, but doesn’t always have it. This believer doesn’t use his failures as an excuse to keep failing, but as means of conviction that will keep him from failing in the future. This believer is imperfect, but his desire is to walk consistently in the ways of God. He doesn’t make excuses, he is asking for God’s help to help him live right. Too many Christians see failure to live for God as an irreversible condition, rather than a stepping stone to obedience. This saint was not embracing failure, he was lamenting it. The desired end for this convicted saint is found in verse 6. If the prayer of this saint is fulfilled, having his ways directed by God to keep His statutes, then the result would be a life that is not ashamed in failure. A life that is directed by God to keep the statutes of God would be a life that is pleasing to God, and would face no shame as a result of failure. This does not mean that failure would not occur occasionally in the life of the believer; it simply means that failure would not be a way of life, and hence an excuse. We need more Christians with the heart of this saint, rather than a heart of selfishness.
4. **The purpose of the blessed believer – vs. 7-8 -**. We find in the closing verses of this first stanza a purpose that results from an understanding and application of what God says about real blessings. The Psalmist in these two verses says three things in regards to purpose, “I will”, twice and “I shall”. The Psalmist says that he will accomplish “praise” with “uprightness of heart”. He will accomplish the learning of God’s “righteous statutes”, and he will “keep Thy judgments”. These phrases speak of purpose, the idea of accomplishing something. A major key to the Christian life is purpose. If we really want something, we must purpose to accomplish it. The Psalmist could get to the point of purpose, because he already understood, and applied the principles in the first six verses. We can’t accomplish the things of God without application of the wishes of God, and purpose of the heart to do so. If we really want the real blessings of God, we have to acquire them God’s way.