

The Blessedness of God's Word

Psalm 119:1-8

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Introduction: I introduced Psalm 119 last week by considering the author, the audience, & the address of this Psalm. MacArthur refers to this Psalm as “the Mount Everest of the Psalter.” It has also been referred to as “the Christian’s golden ABC’s of the praise, love, power, & use of the Word of God.” Another writes, “Every verse contains in it either a *praise* of God’s Word, from some excellent quality of it; or a *protestation* (a strong declaration or affirmation) of David of his unfeigned affection towards it; or else a *prayer* for grace, to conform himself unto it, for unto one of these 3 – *praises, prayers, or protestations*, may all the verses of this Psalm be reduced” (William Cowper). Verse one is considered by many to be the key verse of the Psalm. Compare this blessedness with what we read in the introduction to the Book of Revelation. “*Blessed is he that readeth, & they that hear the words of this prophecy, & keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand*” (1:3). We might well apply this verse to Psalm 119; for there is a blessing for those who read, & hear, & then go on to be obedient to it. Spurgeon writes, “As David thus begins his Psalm (119:1), so should young men begin their lives, so should new converts commence their profession, so should all Christians begin every day. Settle it in your hearts as a first postulate & sure rule of practical science that holiness is happiness, & that it is our wisdom first to seek the kingdom of God & His righteousness.”

Note with me tonight the first 8 verses, all beginning in Hebrew with the letter Aleph, 2 thoughts: Defilement is avoided by the Word & delight is experienced in the Word.

I. Defilement is avoided by the Word (:1, 3, 6, 8)

A. “*Blessed are the undefiled in the way...*” (:1)

1. God’s way >

a. Explained: Isaiah 43:7, “*...for I have created him for My glory...*”

b. Exhorted: I Corinthians 6:20, “*...glorify God in your body & Spirit, which are God’s*” & I Corinthians 10:31, “*...do all to the glory of God.*”

2. Man’s way >

a. Explained: Proverbs 14:12, “*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*”

b. Evidenced: Recent cheating scandals in chess, fishing tournaments, & on-line poker.

Summary: “What is the chief end of man: To glorify God & to enjoy Him forever” (Westminster Confession).

B. “*They also do no iniquity...*” (:3)

1. Because “*they walk in His ways*” > implies seeking after God & His Word.

2. Because, “*Walk in the Spirit, & ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh*” (Galatians 5:16).

Summary: This does not mean sinlessness – see I John 1:9 & 2:1.

C. “*Then shall I not be ashamed...*” (:6)

1. Genesis 3 > the sin of disobedience brought shame to Adam & Eve.

2. Proverbs 13:5 > “*...but a wicked man is loathsome, & cometh to shame.*”

D. "...O forsake me not utterly." (:8)

1. "Feeling his own incapacity he trembles lest he should be left to himself, & this fear is increased by the horror which he has of falling into sin" (Spurgeon).
2. "But I keep under my body, & bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Corinthians 9:27).

II. Delight is experienced in the Word (:1-8)

A. The prospect of walking in God's way (:1-4)

1. The analogy of "walking" (:1) >
 - a. It speaks of common, everyday life in obedience to the Word of God. His "law" is everything God says; emphasizing His authority & our need to listen.
 - b. It involves progress (goal), purpose (gain), & persistence (grit).
2. The analysis of "walking" (:2) >
 - a. Those "that keep His testimonies" – everything to which God bears witness. "He witnesses to Himself, to right & wrong, to human failings, to human good, to His saving actions, to His creation of the world" (Powlison).
 - b. Those "that seek Him with the whole heart" – this involves the desire to commune with Him more closely, to follow Him more carefully, & to promote His glory more clearly.
 - c. Those that "keep Thy precepts diligently" – these are the detailed practical instructions.

B. The prayer for walking in God's way (:5-7)

1. To be "...directed to keep Thy statutes!" – things that are written down. "They are engraved as standing truth, standing orders, a permanent constitution" (Powlison).
2. To have "...respect unto all Thy commandments" – They "tell you exactly how to live, what to do, how to love & trust (given with authority)" (Powlison).
3. To have "learned Thy righteous judgments" – or "ordinances," with an emphasis upon how God evaluates things (reveals His decisions & actions).

C. The promise to walk in God's way (:7-8)

1. "I will praise Thee with uprightness of heart" > "Be sure that he who prays for holiness will one day praise for happiness" (Spurgeon). Do you praise the Lord for the truths He is teaching you each day? See James 1:3-7.
2. "I will keep Thy statutes" > a calm resolve; compare song "I Am Resolved" (#391).

Conclusion: We presume or simply take for granted that the psalmist is not only a believer in God, but one who believes in the Divine inspiration of God's Word. It has been said that the Lord knows us better than we know ourselves. Therefore we ought to willingly submit our will to His will & determine to obey His Word. Psalm 119 teaches us of our need for resolution as well as recognition of dependence on Him. Both are needed in overcoming temptation & for doing that which is right.

As we work our way through this psalm, let's remember the "tactics" I gave you last week: The psalmist shares his adoration (asserting who the Lord is); he shares his confession (speaking of struggles & failings); he shares his petitions (pleading for God's help in his time of need); & he shares his affirmations (declaring his convictions & delights).

I close with Spurgeon's opening words of his study in Psalm 119. "We set out upon this exposition with blessedness before us; we see the way to it, & we know where the law of it is to be found: let us pray that as we pursue our meditation we may grow into the habit & walk of obedience, & so feel the blessedness of which we read."