

Regard for, Reward from, & Reliance upon God's Word

Psalm 119:161-168

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Introduction: “Blessed are the Balanced” is the title of this section by Wiersbe. He speaks of a balanced life of faith, & divides these 8 verses: “Respect & rejoicing (:161-162); love & hate (:163); praise & poise (:164-165) & walking & waiting (:166-168).” Each of these verses begins with the letter “*shin*” – the 21st letter of the Hebrew alphabet. I see 3 major divisions in this section: Regard for God's Word (:161); reward from God's Word (:162); & reliance upon God's Word (:163-168). Unlike most of this psalm, this stanza (:161-168) & the stanza (:97-104) have no petitions. It speaks primarily of the psalmist's relationship to the Word of God & the God of the Word.

I. His regard for God's word (:161)

A. “Cause-less” persecution >

1. “*Princes*” - are Israelite noblemen (involved in the courts & administration).
2. “*Without a cause*” – for naught; for nothing (cf. I Peter 2:18-20).

B. Careful observation >

1. “His loyalty to the law has not been shaken by the gratuitous hostility of the civil authorities” (Kirkpatrick).
2. His fear is not of his persecutors, but rather a fear lest in offend God. “When we fear God we need not fear anyone else” (Wiersbe).

Summary: “We may well fear God's Word as it denounces curses against His enemies, & fear to be like them, lest we also should fall into condemnation” (Plumer).

II. His reward from God's Word (:162)

A. Rejoicing >

1. The joy of the Lord & the fear of the Lord go hand in hand.
2. “Holy awe is not inconsistent with holy joy” (Kirkpatrick).

B. Rewarding >

1. “*Great spoil*” –
 - a. Spoil of battle, but here it speaks of spiritual battle: in the fight for truth & the strength of understanding the truth.
 - b. Spoil of unexpected discovery (hidden treasure).Summary: The psalmist “discovered his portion in the promises of holy writ & is able to enjoy it for himself, knowing by the witness of the Holy Spirit that it is all his own” (Spurgeon).
2. “*Findeth*” – “The promises of God in the Bible are better than money in the bank, because they will never lose their value, & nobody can take them from us” (Wiersbe).

III. His reliance upon God's Word (:163-168)

A. Love & hate (:163) >

1. The Word of God tells us how to differentiate between love & hate.
2. “Falsehood denotes heathenism & heathenish tendencies, in control to the truth of God's law” (Kirkpatrick).
3. Compare Psalm 97:10, “*Ye that love the LORD, hate evil*” (cf. 119: 97, 105, 113, 127-128).

B. Praise & peace (:164-165) >

1. Praise not only morning, noon, & night, but constantly & continuously (“*Seven times*” – many times; number of completion or perfection).
2. Praise for God’s righteous judgments – “judgments of righteousness (see 119:7).
3. “*Great peace*” – manifold; sufficient; mighty (cf. Phil. 4:6).
4. “*Nothing shall offend them*” – cause them to stumble; no occasion of stumbling.

Summary: “The singing saint is a stable saint, walking on a level path even when the enemy digs pits & sets up obstacles” (Wiersbe).

C. Expectation & examination (:166-168) >

1. Expecting salvation while evidencing obedience (:166).
 - a. “*Hoping*” – waiting expectantly.
 - b. “No other text more happily presents the true doctrine concerning grace & works, relying & doing, hoping & obeying, expecting all from God’s sovereign mercy. Yet performing all known duties from a tender conscience & true gratitude” (Plumer).
2. Keeping God’s testimonies while evidencing love for them (:167).
 - a. “*Testimonies*” – God’s revealed law; the witness & confirmation of His promises, the witness of God’s mind & will for man’s duty.
 - b. “*Exceedingly*” – exceeding in measure & in expression (cf. 119:97).
3. Keeping God’s precepts while examined by Him (:168).
 - a. “*Precepts*” – (21 times in Psalm 119) – that which reason teaches, deposited in our nature. That which is entrusted to man by God (man’s duty)..
 - b. “*My ways*” (examined) – “My habits of life & of speech & of thought, my secret ways & my public conduct” (Plumer).

Summary: “With the courage of a good conscience he appeals to God’s omniscience in proof of the sincerity of His purpose” (Kirkpatrick).

Application: “We must keep both the precepts & the testimonies, the commands of God by our obedience to them & His promises by our reliance on them” (Henry).

Conclusion: Plumer sums up these verses when he writes: “There is a beautiful harmony & symmetry in Christian character. Fear makes the godly man sober; joy makes him lively; abhorrence of sin makes him cautious & watchful; love makes him serve willingly & give liberally; peace makes him tranquil; hope gives an anchor to his soul; faith in an omniscient God makes him serve not man, but his Maker; praise gives him songs in the night, & obedience makes him work righteousness with all diligence.” Consider again that the only “cure” for the spirit of lying is a sincere love for God’s Word. “God’s Word is truth, is preeminently the truth; & he who loves truth must hate a lie; as he who loves a lie must hate the truth” (Plumer). The psalmist’s desire for “*salvation*” can speak of deliverance from trouble in this life or perhaps longing to be delivered from this life. David said in Psalm 17:15, “*As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake, with Thy likeness.*” This could be equated today with the believer’s “*blessed hope*” (Titus 2:13), which includes his looking, longing, & loving the Savior’s appearing. Such anticipation of the Lord’s return should result in purity of life for the one with such a desire (cf. I John 3:3). Christ spoke of the believers who are waiting & watching for the Lord to return as well as working until His return (Luke 12: 35-43). Note again the psalmist’s love for the Word of God & his love for the God of the Word. How about you here tonight?