

The Psalmist's Plea for Revival

Psalm 119:153-160

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Introduction: The eight verses in this section of Psalm 119 each begin with the 20th letter of the Hebrew alphabet – Resh. A key phrase, “*quicken me...*”, is found 3 times in these 8 verses. The word “*quicken*” is variously translated: “revive” (NKJV); “give me life” (ESV); or “give me life or lift me up & keep me going” (Wiersbe). Wiersbe then uses the idea of “redeem” for his theme – “Strength for the Journey.” He sees three sections here: “Redeem me, for You are my Redeemer (:153-155); Redeem me, for You are merciful (:156-158); & Redeem me, for Your Word can be trusted (:159-160).” I see three divisions here as well which I suggest: “Revival & God’s Word (:153-154); Revival & God’s judgments (:155-156); & Revival & God’s lovingkindness (:157-160).” It appears that the psalmist’s prayers are in more earnest as he nears the end of this psalm. It seems to suggest that his trials will continue & therefore the Lord’s help is constantly & continually needed. The psalmist gives three reasons why he should be revived: “*I do not forget Thy law*” (:153); “*Yet do I not decline from Thy testimonies*” (:158); & “*I love Thy precepts*” (:159). Consider with me tonight the psalmist’s plea for revival.

I. Revival & God’s **Word** (:153-154)

A. His prayer for **deliverance** (:153a & :154a)

1. “*Consider mine affliction*” >
 - a. “*Consider*” – the word suggests: “see to” & is used in Genesis 22:8 where Abraham declares, “*God will provide...*” The psalmist is asking God to “see to” his needs. The Lord can “see” needs & also “see to” the needs, providing what is needed (cf. Psalm 34:15).
 - b. “*Affliction*” – the word probably refers to false accusations & bitter persecutions.
 - c. “*And deliver me*” – the word “*deliver*” means to extricate or rescue, remove from harm.
2. “*Plead my cause*” >
 - a. “*Plead*” – this is a legal term, suggesting “the dispute between him & his persecutors is represented as a lawsuit: Will not Jehovah be his advocate?” (Kirkpatrick).
 - b. “*And deliver me*” – a different word than in verse 153 – here is speaks of “to redeem from bondage.”

B. His promise of **devotion** (:153b & :154b)

1. “*I do not forget Thy law*” – “All the fuel to keep the flame of devotion burning on the altar of the heart is the Word of God. Let us not *forget* that” (Plumer).
2. “The more closely we cleave to the Word of God, both as our rule & as our stay, the more assurance we may have of deliverance in due time” (Henry).

II. Revival & God’s **judgments** (:155-156)

A. Salvation is far from the wicked (:155)

1. “*Salvation*” – refers to help or deliverance (not necessarily spiritual salvation).
2. “*Wicked*” – the ungodly of Psalm 1.

Summary: “Salvation is far from the wicked because they are far from God, because God is holy & just, & cannot keep friendship with the vile, because they neither wish nor labor to know, or do His will, not desiring the knowledge of His ways, of the methods of His grace, or of His plan of salvation” (Plumer).

B. Tender mercies are near to the righteous (:156)

1. “*Tender mercies*” – compassions or the yearning of the heart (God’s grace, not man’s merit).
2. “His mercies are tender, for He is full of compassion; they are many, they are great, a fountain that can never be exhausted” (Henry).

III. Revival & God’s lovingkindness (:157-160)

A. The psalmist’s adversaries (:157-158)

1. “*Persecutors*” – treacherous dealers, from the verb “to pursue or to chase.”
2. “*Enemies*” – the authors of his distress.
3. “*Transgressors*” – they that deal unfaithfully; transgress God’s law (cf. I John 3:4).

B. The psalmist’s acclamations (:157-159)

1. “*Yet do I not decline*” – swerve away from.
2. I “*was grieved*” – 2 possibilities:
 - a. He loathed or looked with disgust on the transgressors.
 - b. He was sad both for the sin & the sinners’ doom.Summary: “The dishonor done to God is not the only cause of regret. Sin is the sure path to ruin, & those who keep not God’s word, will, ere long, be dealt with as His enemies” (Morison).
3. “*I love Thy precepts*” –
 - a. “*Love*” is preterite tense > past, present, & future.
 - b. “To love the Word is to obey it, & to obey it is to receive life from it. God’s living Word communicates His life & power to those who read it, meditate on it, & obey it because they love God & His Word” (Wiersbe).

C. The psalmist’s assurances (:160)

1. The **veracity** of God’s Word >
 - a. “There is no untruth in Scripture. It is never commended too highly; it is never trusted too implicitly. It is all faithfulness. It is light without darkness; it is life & spirit” (Plumer).
 - b. “Ever since God began to reveal Himself to the children of men all He said was true & to be trusted” (Henry).
2. The **eternality** of God’s judgments >
 - a. Jesus Himself said, “*Scripture cannot be broken*” (John 10:35).
 - b. “The reason why God’s judgments endure for ever is because they are righteous, & righteousness is immutable” (Plumer).

Conclusion: As the psalmist here pleads for revival according to God’s Word, His judgments. & His lovingkindness, might we echo the prayer of Psalm 85:6, “*Wilt Thou not revive us again: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?*” Plumer suggests, “When conscience accuses, & Satan assails, & the world reproaches, & providence frowns, what can we do but betake ourselves to Him who never forsakes the clients who commit their cause to Him?” The psalmist points out his opposition in 4 terms: “*the wicked*”; “*persecutors*”; “*enemies*”; & “*transgressors.*” One writer observes, “As it is no strange thing to see the godliest men exposed most to persecution; so it is no small measure of grace which God bestoweth on them to bear out the truth against all opposition” (Dickson). We, too, can plead for revival because of our merciful Redeemer whose Word can be absolutely trusted. Is that your prayer tonight?