

# The Word of the Lord in Time of Tribulation

*Psalm 119:25-32*

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**Introduction:** Previously we have considered “The Blessedness of God’s Word” (:1-8); “Take Time to be Holy” (:9-16); & last week, “The Prayer of God’s Servant” (:17-24). I have entitled tonight’s message: “The Word of the Lord in Time of Tribulation” (:25-32). Each of these verses begins with the Hebrew letter “Daleth,” which corresponds with our English letter “D.” It has been suggested that this section of Psalm 119 sings of depression; yet in the spirit of devotion, determination & dependence. Wiersbe calls these verses: “Down but not out.” Verse 24 of the previous section found the psalmist delighting in God’s Word. Here we find him down in the dust. Is there a lesson here that the enemy attacks most severely when we have just enjoyed God’s blessing? Andrew Bonar said, “We must be watchful after the victory as before the battle.” Why is that? Do we “let down our guard” when things are going well & perhaps even lay aside our armor in the “good times”? Though the psalmist now finds himself in “*the dust*,” he doesn’t stay there, but goes to prayer. Note his 4 prayers in his time of need: “*quicken Thou Me*” (:25); “*teach me*” (:26-27); “*strengthen me*” (:28-30); & “defend me” (:31-32, “*put me not to shame*”). Note with me tonight how the psalmist arouses prayer (:25-29), confirms choice (:30-31), & inspires resolve (:32).

## I. The psalmist arouses **prayer** (:25-29)

### A. “*Quicken Thou me...*” (:25).

#### 1. His condition – “*My soul cleaveth unto the dust*” >

a. Persecution from without or depression from within?

b. “I am filled with shame & sorrow for my sins; God is letting loose sore afflictions upon me; my life is in danger; without early relief I cannot sustain my sorrows, but must sink into the grave” (Plumer).

#### 2. His petition – “*quicken Thou me...*” >

a. “*Quicken*” – revive; preserve alive; enliven me; let me be lively.

b. The psalmist may be cleaving in the dust but he is claiming God’s promises.

Summary: “While in a happy state he begs for bountiful dealing (:17), & when in a forlorn condition he prays for quickening” (Spurgeon).

### B. “*Teach me...*” (:26-27).

#### 1. “*I have declared my ways...*” >

a. We confess our sins, not for God to know them, but for us to know them (cf. Gen. 3:9).

b. “Confession is good for the soul.” The Lord has heard his prayer (pardon extended?).

#### 2. “*Teach...Make me to understand...*” >

a. True repentance brings the desire to do right. “Justified men always long to be sanctified” (Spurgeon). Those who have been taught can then teach others.

b. Instead of asking, “How can I get out of this trial?” we should be asking, “What can I get out of this experience?” Compare James 1:2-5.

Summary: “By faith, he expected to see God’s wonders displayed in the midst of his battles” (Wiersbe).

### C. “*Strengthen me...*” (:28-29).

#### 1. “*My soul melteth...*” >

a. This speaks of his dissolving away in tears due to heaviness of heart.

b. The psalmist is in a state of depression, so he cries out to God.

Summary: “When my soul dissolves in tears (cf. Job 16:20) for grief, strengthen me according to Thy promises” (Kirkpatrick).

2. “*Strengthen me...*” >
  - a. The psalmist desires strength to live for the Lord & to obey His Word.
  - b. To be strengthened means also the removal of the way of sin, error, folly, etc.
 Summary: “To be led into a right understanding & practice of God’s Word is an effect of great *grace*” (Plumer).

## II. The psalmist confirms **choice** (:30-31)

- A. “*I have chosen the way of truth...*” (:30).
  1. “*Chosen*” speaks of a deliberate & settled preference.
  2. “*Judgments*” are the declarations of God’s will for one’s life.
  
- B. “*I have stuck unto Thy testimonies...*” (:31).
  1. “*Stuck*” is the same word translated “*cleaveth*” in verse 25. “There is no word expressing closer adherence” (Plumer).
  2. “*Put me not to shame*” – “*Shame*” could refer to confusion & dismay or could express: “Let me not be disappointed of the blessings promised to faithful obedience” (Kirkpatrick).
 Note: The psalmist does not want to bring shame to the Lord’s name (cf. 119:46, 78, & 80).

## III. The psalmist inspires **resolve** (:32)

- A. “*I will run...*”
  1. The psalmist desires to run with energy & zeal to perform the will of God.
  2. “*Run*” is the usual verb expressing the act of racers, or hosts, or of dashing warriors. It marks great alacrity in the business of serving God” (Plumer). See Romans 12:11.
  
- B. “*When Thou shalt enlarge my heart.*”
  1. It is the Lord who can change the heart, encourage the heart, strengthen & enlarge the heart.
  2. It speaks of the heart having a sense of joy & freedom.
 Summary: “Faith delivers us from the confinement of the enemy’s plots & sets us free to enjoy a larger place. He (the psalmist) has gone from biting the dust (:25) to running freely in the way of the Lord!” (Wiersbe).

Conclusion: This section began with the psalmist having a broken & saddened heart by grief & sorrow. He ends with a strong & energetic heart, now running the race of life (cf. Hebrews 12:1-2). Such delight in serving the Lord is the gift of God’s grace.

How is your heart tonight? Is it a changed heart, made new by the grace & power of God? Is your heart encouraged, resting in the promises of God (see Joshua 1:7-9)? And is your heart rejoicing in the Lord, trusting Him through every trial & test (see Philippians 4:4 & James 1:3)? Plumer writes: “Enlightened, evangelical, holy obedience can only spring from the operation of grace on the heart. We never begin to act for God, till He begins to ‘work in us all His holy will, & the work of faith with power’.”

By God’s grace might we all heed Proverbs 3:5-6, “*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; & lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, & He shall direct thy paths.*”