

Psalm 119:41-48

VAU

“Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, *even* thy salvation, according to thy word. So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word. And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments. So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever. And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts. I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed. And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.”

Introduction

Psalm 119, we have come to verse 41, and as we come there, there is a request that’s put in front of the LORD by this Psalmist, who desires to be witness of the LORD’s work in his life and of his own relationship with the LORD. So the first three verses, 41, 42, and 43 are a request that he puts before the LORD. And then from 44 to 48, kind of the results, he promises in regards to that request. See he says **“I shall keep thy law continually for ever and ever.” (verse 44) “I shall walk” “I shall speak” “I will delight” “I will lift up unto the LORD” “I will meditate”**. He says ***LORD, I need you to work in my life, you’re the initiator, do these things, and these are the things LORD I have committed to do.*** So let’s read through these first 8 verses, and then we’ll look at them together. **“Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, *even* thy salvation, according to thy word. So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word. And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments. So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever. And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts. I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed. And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.” (verses 41-48)**

‘Let Your Salvation Come To Me LORD, According To Your Word’

First he calls out on the LORD, he says **‘Let your mercies,’** your translation might say **‘tender love’** or **‘divine love’**, or it may say **‘Let thy salvation,’** the idea is **‘Let your mercies, tender love, your divine**

love come to me LORD,' "O LORD, Jehovah, even thy salvation, according to thy word." That's his concept of God's mercy and loving kindness, it's God's salvation, and it isn't just any salvation, it's salvation "according to thy word." And listen, that's clear. You and I, the salvation we want to be a witness of, that's what he's going to get to, is the salvation that's according to God's Word. It's not just '*Hey, church is cool, Jesus is really something, man, you've gotta come, we're talking about Jesus.*' It is very specific that there is sin, and sin is the problem in the human race. And the only answer for that sin is substitutionary atonement, someone innocent has to pay the price and die in our place, or else we die for our own sins. That individual was clearly predicted throughout the Old Testament, before Jesus Christ [Yeshua haMeschiach in Hebrew] came and fulfilled those prophecies. He walked in our shoes and in our skin, he died in our place, he bore our sins, it says, upon the tree, the sin of mankind. He came there under the wrath of Almighty God, and those sins were punished, he made atonement for us, he rose on the third day, the evidence of the fact that the Father accepted all of that, he ascended into heaven, and he's coming soon for his Bride [that in essence is the Gospel, which if accepted by an individual, brings salvation], and that's the Jesus that we believe in, and that's the salvation we believe in [see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/misc/WhatIsTheGospel%20.htm>].

It's salvation according to the Word of God, it's not a lot of other salvations that are out there. Ah, we're not waiting for our space-brothers to come and take us, there's lots of other stuff out there. No, this is salvation according to God's Word.

'I Want To Be Able To Give An Answer To Him Who Reproaches Me—Out Of Your Word'

He says, **"So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word."** (verse 42) ***'I want to be able to give an answer to him that reproaches me, who holds me in contempt,' or 'the one who makes a mockery of me, for I trust in your Word. LORD, let me have an answer from your Word. I trust in your Word, let the salvation that so tenderly works in my life be according to your Word, so that I will have an answer to give.'*** You know, it's interesting, I was reading through it, of course, I'm thinking of **1st Peter chapter 3**, where it says there ***'Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, be ready always to give an answer to every man [or woman] that asketh you a reason of the hope that lies within you with meekness and fear.'*** I'm sitting there, I'm studying, looking at this, and I have this Smart-phone now, so it pings and it whistles, it needs to be careful, because I haven't yet accepted it, completely. It could still go, on one of those days, and I could have Judy searching for a phone that does

nothing but rings when someone wants to talk to me, doesn't do anything else, life is much simpler. [My feelings exactly, so I still haven't bowed to buying one of those blasted things—I hate telephones anyway.] But anyhow, it was a blessing. Now look, this email from another country from someone there who had gotten saved, he said *“My pride was into intellectualism, and education, and I didn't want to hear anything, and I used to mock Christians, and finally I walked into this Calvary Chapel and was sitting, and was listening, and I heard him talk about the love of Jesus Christ and of the Father, and tears began to flow, and I got saved, and I've been studying and studying, because I want to be able to give an answer to every man that asks me of the hope,”* he goes right into the verse, you know, that I'm studying. And I thought, *‘Alright, I like a Smart-phone right now.’* [laughter] You know, from another country, just this request *‘Pastor Joe, just pray for me,’* I don't know the person, just remarkable. So, the Psalmist says here, **“Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, even thy salvation, according to thy word. So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word. And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments.”** (verses 41-43) he's completely aware of his humanity, he is completely aware that there is no power, there is no word of truth in his mouth, but the LORD allows it to happen. And we have to be careful there sometimes.

God's Law Gives True Freedom

“Take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments.” (verse 43) and then he says this, **“So shall I keep thy law for ever and ever.”** (verse 44), *‘if you'll do these things, let me have your Word so I can give an answer, so shall I keep thy law, continually, forever and ever.’* it speaks basically of the Old Testament, the first five Books of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy). **“And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.”** again, **“I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.”** (verses 45-46) **“I will delight”** *‘I will lift up, I will meditate,’* he says, *‘LORD I'll do these things.’* **“I will delight in thy commandments, which I have loved.”** (verse 47) Now the profound thing is, that he gets into here, he says **“I will keep your law forever and ever,”** *‘I'll keep your law forever and ever, and I will walk at liberty.’* We have the complete opposite idea of that, you know, *‘If I'm going to keep the Law, then I'm gonna live in bondage if I do that. If I'm gonna keep you Law, I'm gonna be restricted, I'm gonna be tied down.’* We think that liberty is being able to do whatever we want to do, that that is actually being free from law, that's how we perceive liberty, freedom [using this logic] is being able to do whatever we want to do, outside of God's Law. Well you can ask any drunk that's destroyed their

family, or any druggy that's ruined their life and the lives of those around them, anybody whose given themselves to immorality and destroyed a home, destroyed a family, you can ask them what that kind of freedom produces. Ask them what it's done for them. You know, the Psalmist says here, ***'I'm gonna keep your law forever and ever, and because I'm gonna do that, I'm gonna walk at liberty.'*** Now the Psalmist says ***'Your Word, it's like honey to me, it's sweet to the taste.'*** Jesus says ***"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, you'll find rest for your souls."*** He says if you'll yoke yourself with me, isn't that interesting, you'll find rest. To be yoked with the yoke with Christ is to find rest. James talks about looking into the perfect law of liberty [and realize, when James wrote this there was no New Testament, so the law he was referring to was the Torah, the Ten Commandment law of God]. It says here if we do that, we'll be free, if we understand the Word of God and the Law of God, and we let that govern our lives, we'll find true freedom. Because the freedom we're longing for is a freedom that is within parameters, those parameters are God's Word. We're willing to accept that continually in the natural. If you yield to the traffic laws in Philadelphia, you can drive freely, you're at liberty. If you yield to the laws of aerodynamics you can fly, freely. If you work on a high-rise building climbing around outside, if you yield to the law of gravity, you can do that job safely. Here the Psalmist is saying, ***'LORD, if you'll do this, if you'll give me your Word, you'll work in my heart, let the supernatural become part of me, LORD I'll keep your law forever and ever, and I'll walk in liberty, LORD, it'll be the thing that sets me free, I'll be able to walk before you in liberty,'*** he says, ***"for I seek thy precepts."*** (verse 45b) ***'I want to understand how to govern my life.'*** [see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/whatisgrace/whatisgraceintro.htm>]

"I Will Speak Of Thy Testimonies Also Before Kings And Will Not Be Ashamed"

"I will speak" 'hey look, I'm not gonna be ashamed,' "of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed." (verse 46) 'I'm gonna give testimony, I'm, gonna talk to people in the street, in the supermarket, wherever,' "I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed." (verse 46) If I get called before the holipoloy, big shot, wherever it is, Jesus said, that we should remember that if we're called into that situation before a judge or a ruler, to take no anxious thought, he says, because if you're there genuinely, in that very hour the Holy Spirit will give you the words you should say. And here the Psalmist says ***"I will speak of thy testimonies before kings, and I will not be ashamed."*** Again, I remember going out with part of the Gram team, and they told us that every world leader, starting

from Winston Churchill, when they were alone with Billy Graham had asked him about the return of Jesus Christ and Armageddon, whatever they claimed their faith was, whatever they claimed they believed. Because these are people who had the intelligence community dumping on them every day, and go to bed every night and wonder if they're gonna wake up in the same world the next morning. And when they were alone with him they would ask those questions. Cathy and I were out with one of his daughters, and she said, *"You know my dad's the same, when he goes to Washington he takes his Bible and he talks about Jesus, that's what he is, that's what he does, he's no different from that wherever, it doesn't matter what company he's in, he has his Bible and he talks about Jesus."* And world rulers invite him, and they ask him to be there. It says here **"I will speak of thy testimonies before kings, and will not be ashamed."** (verse 46)

"I Will Meditate In Thy Statutes"

"And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved." (verse 47) What do we delight in? **"My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes."** (verse 48) Wonderful as we sing his Word here, with hands raised. The idea is surrender, lifting up your hands, LORD, to your commandments, to your will I'll surrender to that. **"I will also lift up my hands unto thy commandments, which I have loved;"** notice, **"and I will meditate in thy statutes"** that's a wonderful thing to undertake. What happens is, it comes to us anyway, because as life goes on, when you're a teenager, when you're younger, you may not have to meditate in his statutes, but as life goes on, it wears you out, it wears you out. You loose friends, you loose your health, you loose time, and of course you loose your hair, you loose your eyesight, you loose your hearing, you loose your teeth. It's a kind of journey of loss. But as it goes on, we do meditate in his Word. Verses that we knew, that didn't seem very powerful in our lives when we were younger, when life wears us out, it runs us down, all of a sudden they have new power, and they have new strength. The same things we thought we were familiar with, all of sudden they're screaming at us off the page. And it's a wonderful thing. He says I'll meditate in thy statutes. And as he moves into these next set of verses, let's read them. And again, the thought kind of continues.

Psalm 119:49-56

ZAIN

“Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me. The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from thy law. I remember thy judgments of old, O LORD, and have comforted myself. Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law. Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage. I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night, and have kept thy law. This I had, because I kept thy precepts.” (verses 49-56)

“Remember The Word Unto Thy Servant, Upon Which Thou Hast Caused Me To Hope”

He’s gonna meditate here. **‘You made me promises, you caused me to hope in your Word, this is my comfort.’** Now he moves into the next set of verses, verse 49 is a petition, he asks for something, and in the rest of the verses is kind of his prayer. He’s asking for something in verse 49, and look what he says, he says **‘LORD, there’s something I want you to remember,’** and look down in verse 52, he says **‘I’ve remembered,’** and look down in verse 55, **‘LORD, I’ve remembered.’** So he says **‘LORD, I need you to remember,’** he knows the LORD doesn’t forget, **‘It’s not a problem LORD,’** he’s asking the LORD “to call to mind” in that sense. He says **‘LORD, I remember, I keep things on my heart.’** **Verse 49, “Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.”** Now there’s great confidence when you can say that to him, and call yourself his servant. I wonder this evening in Iran as Saeed is in the prison, how dear and how deep certain verses are to him that he is hoping in, in the prison in Iran from being a believer. Franklin Graham sent an email today to keep him in prayer because there are a number of ISIS members in the prison that he’s in, in Iran, that no doubt would love to get their hands on him. How different the Word of God is in that kind of a circumstance, the same verses, the same verses. He says **“Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.” (verses 49-50) ‘Thy Word has given me life, your Word is my hope and my comfort, remember the promise you made to me LORD, and I find my comfort in this, I have hoped in it LORD, I need you to do that for me LORD.’** He’s in one of those circumstances, he speaks here of derision, he speaks of horror, he speaks of great difficulty. He’s saying **‘LORD, in the middle of this,’** and look, childlike faith again. Years ago I studied this, I heard the story of this little boy, out of an unsaved family, was taken by some Baptists, his neighbors, had taken him to church and Sunday school, and he was there a few weeks, and he prayed and asked Christ into his heart, a little boy, seven or eight years old, and he really got saved. And it was

dramatic, and he started to love the Word, he was reading the Word, and he read that Satan was the prince of darkness, and he read it one night before he went to bed. His mom, who wasn't a believer, turned out the lights, and he thought, *'Here I am in the dark, he must be in here too, if he's the prince of darkness. And my verse is John 3:16, Lord, I got saved, you so loved me you gave your Son that I wouldn't perish, would have everlasting life,'* and he said *'The darkest place in my room was under the bed, that's where he must be, must be under my bed.'* So the story goes that the little boy went and found John 3:16, and he put his finger on it, and he pushed it under the bed and said *"Here, read it for yourself!"* [loud laughter] I think the Lord loves that kind of faith, you know. I think he loves that kind of faith. A number of years ago, in Germany, I went to Wartburg, to the castle where Martin Luther translated the Greek New Testament into German, and just fascinating and incredible of the genius. Oh ya, he had some major things wrong in his eschatology, but a brilliant man. And the story goes, you go there to the study where he did it, there's an old porcelain heater in there, and on the floor where he put his foot, it's a backbone of a whale, a vertebra from a whale, which is the kind of backbone this guy had, you know. And of course the story is, is that he sat in there, he's finishing up the translation, he took 18 different dialects in German, and for every word he translated from the Greek to German, he picked the most common word from all 18 dialects, and he created modern German in 11 weeks, from 18 different dialects in German. There was no TV, no I-phones to interrupt, there was nothing, he worked, so as the story goes, as he's finishing up, Satan appears in the study and says *'Luther, you know, you're a blasphemer, you're blasphemous, you're no good, you have wicked thoughts, you have doubts, you're a hypocrite,'* and he said *'Wait a minute,'* and he got a paper and pencil and started writing them down, *'More?'* and as he wrote the list he kept saying to the devil, *'More, more?'* and he wrote this long list. And finally he said the devil's at it, and the devil said *'That's it.'* And he got out his pen, dipped the pen back in the inkwell and he wrote of course at the bottom real big, *Washed in the blood of the Lamb,* and he took his inkwell and threw it at the devil, and the devil disappeared and it splattered all over the wall. So for a number of centuries there was a big ink splat on the wall. But as tourists would come through Wartburg they would all peel a piece of it off, now there's a big wall where everything is peeled off the wall there. [For a good article on Martin Luther, see <https://www.ucg.org/beyond-today/beyond-today-magazine/martin-luther-the-unfinished-reformation>] But ***'Cause me to trust in your Word, LORD, remember the word that you have spoken to your servant, whether we're a child or whether we're a brainiac,'*** we still need the Lord to do these things in our lives, ***"Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope."*** ***'Upon which YOU have caused me to hope,***

LORD, you've done this, LORD, you've done that.' I remember graduating from High School in 1968, I didn't have any hope, I didn't have any hope [the Vietnam War was going full tilt, and the draft board was probably looking for this young Joe Focht], 1968, the world was falling apart, Vietnam War was raging, three of my friends that were a year ahead of me, they graduated in 1967 [when I did, went straight into Submarine School, New London CT], were dead by the time I graduated, killed in Vietnam. I remember in '63, my dad worked for the Naval Department, and the Cuban Missile Crisis had gone on, and every night my dad would come home and turn on the TV, and I'd try to say something and he'd go *'Be quiet!'* You know what it's like, it's so serious, and every night I had to sit there and try to figure out what it meant that Khrushchev was putting missiles in Cuba, and whether we were all gonna die, I was 13, I could tell by the way my dad looked, it wasn't good, whatever was going on, you know. [Want the full story, from WWII to now, including the full scoop on the Cuban Missile Crisis? it's in <http://www.unityinchrist.com/topical%20studies/America-ModernRomans1.htm>] I remember graduating, thinking *'Well what am I gonna do, am I going to work 30 years and retire in Florida, they're going to blow the world up, what am I going to do?'* And just the natural place to go was LSD, that made everything seem a lot better. I had no hope. I know, I know. I had no hope. Jesus Christ changed all of that, because I met a living Saviour, not a religion, a Living Saviour, he's alive, he's coming again, this whole show's gonna close down. It may get horrible before we get out of here, but he's coming, and there is an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, it fades not away, it's beyond all of this, we're all gonna be there together, we're all going to be there together [applause]. And he's caused us to hope in those things. A lot of people think we are nuts. Some of us have longer lists than others, we work harder at it.

"This Is My Comfort In My Affliction: For Thy Word Hath Quickened Me"

"Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me." (verses 49-50) Now look, there are times in all of our lives when affliction comes, no one is exempt. Christians suffer like unbelievers suffer, Christians get cancer like unbelievers get cancer, Christians go through difficult things like unbelievers go through difficult things. I just can't imagine going through those things without the Lord. But there are times in our affliction when no human voice matters. There is a place when our heart is so broken and we are so confused, and we're in something so terrible, it seems incongruent with God's love and his commitment to us, that the only thing that can speak to us in those places is the Word of God, times when no human voice or wisdom

can bring hope or comfort. He says **“Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which YOU, LORD hast caused me to hope.”** And he would never do that, to hang a carrot out in front of us and to disillusion us, *‘You’ve caused me to hope in this.’* **“This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.”** (verse 50) Look, **“The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from thy law.”** (verse 51) *‘they’ve mocked me, they’ve held me in derision, yet have I not declined from thy law, I haven’t stepped away, I haven’t tried to soften things to make everything hunky-dory with the unbelievers who were picking on me.’* **“I remembered thy judgments of old, O LORD, and have comforted myself.”** (verse 52) *‘the Red Sea, everything you did with Noah, what you’ve done in creation, what you’ve done with Jonah, I remembered thy judgments of old, O LORD, and have comforted myself, that you’re the same, I’ve held on.’*

It’s A Scary World We Live In

Look, **“Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law.”** (verse 53) and I know for all of us, look, “horror” your translation might say, “discouragement,” it can be “despondency,” it can be “brokenheartedness,” it speaks of complete discouragement, looking at the unsaved world around us. And we look at the Middle East tonight, we look at what’s happening in Iraq, and we see Christians being slaughtered [by ISIS] because they’re Christians, little kids getting their heads cut off. We see war and innocent people being killed on both sides, and there’s a level of horror around that, because I have grandkids [me too, my constant prayer is for the salvation of their parents and them too], I have grandkids. If it’s time for me to go, I wasn’t planning on staying anyway. I told Cathy, that’s the only way you’ll ever see any real money, is if you get the insurance. She said *“If you die and leave me with all these kids I’ll kill ya.”* [laughter] Doesn’t sound like much of a threat to me. And my kids are walking with the Lord, they’re adults, and I trust if a gun was put to their head and were told to deny Christ, they’d say *“No thank you.”* But my grandkids, five, one on the way, my grandkids. There’s something that knaws at me when I think of the world that they’re growing up in. **“Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law.”** (verse 53)

“Thy Statutes Have Been My Songs In The House Of My Pilgrimage”

Wonderful, he says this, **“Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.”** (verse 54) He’s gone from affliction to singing, he’s gone from derision to singing. He’s gone from horror to

singing, he says ***'In the middle of all of this, LORD, thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.'*** He remembers, we're passing through, like Asaph in ***Psalm 73, 'I saw the prosperity of the wicked, I saw righteous people suffering, I struggled with it, I didn't know what to do, my feet had well nigh slipped, I went through all this,'*** he said, ***'I can't even talk to people of faith about it, because LORD, I'll stumble your children, if I talk about it, this is all buggin me and I haven't said anything.'*** He said, ***'Until I went into the house of the LORD, and then I remembered their end, I went into the house of God and it brought everything back into perspective of eternity,'*** and he said, ***'I realized I was living like a brute beast, I had the wrong perspective on everything.'*** And the Psalmist here says wonderfully, ***"Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage."*** And the statutes are again, comes from the Hebrew root "to engrave" or "to cut," it speaks of the things he's decreed, or the things he's ordained [such as the Sabbath and Holy Days of Leviticus 23, they are ordained, decreed as holy convocations. That's an example of what statutes in God's Law are], and that they can be engraved upon our hearts. ***"Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage."*** The brevity of all this LORD, you know, the brevity of life can be crushing without the Word of God, if you don't know the Lord. Look at people, what they're doing. They're 50 years old, they're getting a pierced ear, they're getting nipped and tucked, they're getting fat sucked out, they're spending all this money to look better, it's a losing battle, you'll look great when you die. It don't shorten anything up. Spend that money and have fun. Jon Courson said, people go to the gym, they work out, they work out, they work out, helping them think it's gonna help them live longer, there's nothing wrong with that, it's just physical exercise profits for a little while, temporarily, but they say for each hour in the gym, you live, I forget, like two or three extra hours, and he said the shame of it is, early in your life, instead of going out and having fun and enjoying yourself, you put all of those hours in the gym, and then you live all of those hours at the end of your life when you're broke down and decrepit you could buy and go to heaven that you spent your time in the gym instead of enjoying life when you were younger, you get to enjoy yourself and then get out early. Just a perspective, I guess. ***"Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage."*** **(verse 54)**, listen, how many of us go through a death of a loved one, go through some terrible news from the doctor, we're losing something incredible, and you come to church, and you sing the same songs that you've sung before, only now there's tears rolling down your face. Now your eyes are closed and your hands are raised. The same words have more power than they ever have before, and they are engraved on our hearts, those statutes become the songs in the house of our pilgrimage. ***Psalm 42*** says this, ***'Deep calleth unto deep, at the noise of thy waterspouts, all thy waves and billows are gone over me,'*** David

says ***'I can hardly breathe,' 'Yet the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the day time and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.'*** ***'all your waves, all your billows are gone over me LORD, in the daytime I sense your lovingkindness, and at night your song shall be with me.'*** Again, you think of, let me read a few from Isaiah, that are wonderful, Isaiah says this, ***'The ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy above their heads, they shall obtain joy and gladness. Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.'*** Again, Isaiah it says, ***'Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return with singing to Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. They shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.'*** And you think Paul in Acts chapter 16, and Silas, thrown down in the prison, and it says they began to pray and sing praises to the Lord. And Paul's not saying to Silas, ***'Wait till you see this, this is gonna blow your mind after this chapter.'*** Paul never read it before. He doesn't say ***'Don't give me a hard time, just let's sing and the prison doors are going to open, you'll see, it'll blow your mind.'*** He had no guarantees, same Lord was giving him songs in the night. I wonder about Saeed, what song might be in his heart, ***'On Christ the solid Rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand. It is well with my soul...it is well, it is well with my soul.'*** Affliction, derision, horror, and then he said, ***'You know, thy statutes have been my song in the house of my pilgrimage.'*** ***'I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night, and have kept thy law.'*** (verse 55) ***'in the night, Jehovah God, the covenant God,'*** ***'This I had, because I kept thy precepts.'*** (verse 56) What did he have? The songs of the LORD, the thing that was stirring in his heart. The reason, ***"because I kept thy precepts."***

Psalm 119:57-64

CHETH

"Thou art my portion, O LORD: I have said that I would keep thy words. I entreated thy favour with my whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word. I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments. The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law. At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments. I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts. The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes." (verses 57-64)

“Thou Art My Portion, O LORD

Now, in verse 57, he says, **‘LORD,’** looking up, in continuation of the thought, he says **‘you are my portion, LORD, you yourself,’** he’s realizing that, and now he’s gonna say this, well let’s read it. **“Thou art my portion, O LORD: I have said that I would keep thy words. I entreated thy favour with my whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word. I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments. The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law. At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments. I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.”** What a great bunch, **“The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes.” (verses 57-64)** Now he begins by saying **‘LORD, you’re my portion,’** and then as you read through, he says “I have said” “I entreated” “I thought” “I made haste” “I’ve not forgotten” “I will rise” “I am a companion,” you read through and you see all of these, and none of these things could happen without the Word of God. So, we come, *‘Oh, you go to Calvary, if you go there for counseling they’re just going to tell you what the Bible says.’* And...what do you want me to tell you, what *GQ magazine* says, *Rolling Stone Magazine* says? Of course I’m going to tell you what the Bible says, we’re gonna stand someday before the Lord, and he’s going to say **‘Why didn’t you tell them what the Bible said?’** [I don’t want him saying that to me!] Well I understand we did, that’s all we did. Your Word abides forever. It’s true here today, and it was true there then, that’s what we’re gonna do. And without God’s Word you’re not you’re not gonna be saying “I entreated” “I thought” “I kept all of these things.” We have something to entreat him about, we have something to keep, we have something to hold onto, we have something to sing, we have something to make our own, we have something to quote promises, we have all of that in the Word. And again, you know you look at this 119th Psalm, people say *‘Well this is the song about the Word of God, 173 of the 176 verses mention the Word of God.’* I agree, it’s about the Word of God, **but it’s more about the God of the Word,** because in all 176 verses it mentions him. So it is about the Word of God, and it is about the God of the Word. And after these first few verses, verses 1 through 5, it is a prayer, it is a pouring out of the heart to the God of the Word, **“Thou art my portion, O LORD: I have said that I would keep thy words.” “Thou art my portion”** Sadly, in my own life, some days I get distracted, and my selfish happiness depends on some other thing, getting to watch a pre-season game, getting to do something, getting to take a nap, getting to, whatever, just sometimes, and you know, when difficult things come in life, all of that goes away. We remember **‘LORD, you’re my portion. This is a pilgrimage,**

everything else is fading away, I can sing songs because I MET YOU, years ago, 1972, and when I met you, you were alive and you were risen, and you changed everything. You are my portion.' And I find this, look, Jesus would say to us in John **'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them'** this is what the Psalmist is talking about, **'he it is that loveth me. He that loveth me shall be loved of my father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.'** You know, the reason we want to walk in the Word, the reason we want to hold onto his promises, the reason we want to let those things determine how we live, is because in them he will manifest himself to us. So look, **'You're my portion,'** that means to me there are some options we need to put away. *'When I get bummed I like to do this,'* but the Bible says you shouldn't do that. *'When I have a hard time I want to do this,'* well the Bible says you shouldn't do that. There are some options you need to put away. [and he's talking about sinful responses we have when we get really bummed or have a hard time, say like when things really don't go our way, or something really bad happens, our response is to get drunk, which is against God's Word, that is what Pastor Joe is talking about, a sinful response to things going wrong.] There are some escape hatches you need to block up with cider block and take down the exit sign, or the emergency exit sign. *'Well I don't know, we're having such a hard time, maybe it wasn't the Lord's will for us to get married in the first place.'* Block that exit, it's not Biblical, it doesn't exist, you're married to somebody, the Bible has something to say about that. [If an unbelieving spouse leaves, divorces you, Paul says in such circumstances, you are free to remarry. But the unbelieving spouse must do the leaving. see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/corinthians/cor7.htm>] If he's your portion, what's more important, your freedom, your temporary happiness, or is he your portion? Because I find, personally, in my life, when I look back, there are times, courtship, *'Oh I want to get married, I want to get married,'* and after they get married they think *'I want to be single, I want to be single, I want to be single.'* It's easier to be single and want to be married than to be married and want to be single. But the wonderful thing about courtship to me is, it's a time, if you're sensitive, when the presence of the Lord draws near, for believers. You're waiting until you're married to be sexually intimate, you're looking at his Word at things he has done for you. I remember thinking *'Lord, if you give me, I'm thinking of my first wife, she's the one I still have,'* like I say, I've been married to three different women, but all in one body, so it's not a problem—the years do that. But I remember thinking *'Lord, you say in Corinthians that if you get married you're gonna give yourself to the things of your wife in regards to, in contrast to some of the things to the Lord. You know, Lord, if this happens, it seems,'* and I'm thinking through this process, *'that I'm going to have less time to spend with you.'* And I

remember an overwhelming sense of his presence, and he said *'Look, I'm gonna have you for eternity to myself, and right now you need something tangible. And I am not so selfish that I would keep that from you for a short period of time when I'm gonna have you forever.'* And I think sometimes in courtship, when we do it right, we do it the way we should, the presence of the Lord becomes very real. We realize, ***'Lord, you're my portion.'*** I think at birth, at birth, that is first of all, it's sci-fi if you've ever watched it, it's science fiction, but it's miraculous, it's genius, it's incredible. And the presence of the Lord, he very often I think, in the presence of birth, draws near. And you think, *'Lord, this is wonderful, never had a baby before, you, Lord, you're my portion.'* And certainly at death, you know, the death of a believer, the death of the saints, they're precious in his sight. On this end, sometimes somebody is killed in an accident, unexpected they're gone, sometimes somebody suffers for a very long time and then they're gone. And the difference is, you know, you go through that long process of suffering with someone you love, and finally it comes to the point where you say *'Lord, just take him,'* or *'You can go, go be with the Lord,'* and you go through that, and all of a sudden it's over, whatever measure of pain in losing that presence is, there's still a sense of, still some sense of *'They're with you now Lord.'* When someone dies unexpectedly, all of that travail is on the other side of it, because you weren't expecting it. It's there on either side, depending on how it happens. But in the middle of all of that is the One who rose from the dead, the One who rose from the dead, the hope that we have because of the risen One. And if our hearts are open, his presence draws very near in those seasons in our lives. And the Psalmist is saying here, ***'LORD, you're my portion, you are, above all the other things, and there's blessings and things that you give us in life and all of those things, LORD, you are my portion.'*** and ***"I have said that I would keep thy words."*** He's intended, he's gonna do this, ***'this is what I'm gonna do.'*** We read of ***Daniel, chapter 1, verse 8,*** and it says ***'Daniel purposed in his heart he was going to keep the Word of the LORD.'*** You read in ***Daniel chapter 6, verse 3,*** sixty years later, it says ***'Daniel was a man of an excellent spirit,'*** he determines something when he was 13 or 14 years old, in regards to God, he purposed in his heart he was going to keep the Word of the LORD and not yield to Babylon, and sixty years later the Holy Spirit says ***'This was a man of an excellent spirit.'*** We can make these decisions. ***'I have said, I've made a decision, I'm going to keep your words, O LORD.'***

Repent, For The Kingdom Of God Is At Hand

"I entreated thy favour with my whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word." (verse 58) 'I've made up my mind I'm gonna do this, LORD, I look to you, I'm asking for your favour, and I've

done that with my whole heart, so' "Be merciful unto me according to thy word." 'Your Word tells me that you're merciful.' Now look at this guys, as we go to **verse 59**, look what he says, **"I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies."** **"I thought"**, that's always a good start, you should always use the noggin, that's a good thing. Look what he says though, **"I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies."** The Hebrew says, **"turned back my feet"** to what? **"unto thy testimonies."** He's admitting, **'I was going in the wrong direction. I was walking away, I was going where I shouldn't have gone.'** Whatever the derision, threats that he talked about as we moved through this, whatever he was calling to the LORD, **'Let me be a witness, I won't be ashamed before kings,'** he says **'Finally LORD, you're my portion, and I've entreated your favour, I asked for that LORD, and I thought on my ways, I realized, I am so stupid, I can't believe I'm doing this again, I said I was done with it, I said I wasn't going to do it anymore, I thought on my ways, and I turned back, when I thought on my ways, and I turned back my feet, LORD, to your path, I was going away, and I turned myself back, LORD, to your ways.'** Ezekiel says this, again, **"When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and he doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive, because he considereth and turneth away from all of his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die."** And the Psalmist says, **'I thought on my ways, the way I was living, what I was doing, and I turned my feet back to your testimonies.'** There isn't anybody, because the next verse is going to say **'Hey look, I made haste, I didn't delay.'** **"I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments."** Is there anybody here tonight that has an excuse? We have more light than the Psalmist did when he wrote, we have the complete picture of Jesus Christ. You know Jesus said of John the Baptist that he was the greatest prophet that ever lived, **"among them that are born of women there has not arisen a greater than John,"** Of all the men born of women in the history of humanity, no one's been greater than John, not Abraham, not Elijah, not Jeremiah, not David, not Isaiah, not Pharaoh, not Nebuchadnezzar, not Alexander the Great, not Cyrus, not Caesar, Jesus said of humankind in the midst of all human history, this one here is the greatest to be born among women. And it's because he had a message, **'Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.'** And God sees that call to repentance. Listen, we can get a rub on this in the wrong way, and we can be bugged, because we hear people (religious whacko zealots) screaming it and pointing the finger. Well I think we should be under conviction, don't get me wrong. But if there's some 13 year-old kid that needs to get spanked in the corner, **'Repent you fornicator!'** they always show this guy on the news, I don't know where he comes from, there must be a whole bunch anyways out there, there's always a bunch of them (these religious

whacko zealots), they're out there. God says the greatest born among women was this one, and he said **'Repent, the Kingdom of God is at hand, religious hypocrites, turn away from your religious hypocrisy, tax gatherers and sinners, turn away from those things.'** He didn't shut the door on anybody. God Almighty said **'that's the greatest voice that humankind has ever heard to date, it's the voice calling men and women back to me.'** And finally he could say, **"Repent"** and then, **"Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."** Here the Psalmist is saying, **'Look, I thought on my ways, and as I did, I was willing to be honest, LORD, I turned back, I was going away you.'** That is repentance, metanoia, the changes of the mind, **'my life is going away from you, what I'm doing is vanity, it's foolishness, it's empty, it doesn't mean anything, and LORD I thought about all that, and you know what LORD, I turned back to you, I turned back LORD to your testimonies, I turned back.'** **"I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments."** (verse 60) **'I made haste to do it.'** Look, I don't know about you guys, I can be one who procrastinates. Not all the time, but at very important times, when I need a bit of great procrastination, I know how to do that. But no one in this room whose away from the Lord tonight, whose living in compromise, or whose back at the same old stupid stuff, no one here tonight is withheld by God's will, because God puts someone in front of us that says **'You know, I've thought about my ways, my path was going away from him. I thought about it, and I turned back. And I made haste, I didn't dillydally.'** Every prodigal that's here tonight can turn back and come right back to the Lord, his arms are open, we know that. We know it better than the Psalmist did, because Jesus gave us the complete picture.

"The Bands Of The Wicked Have Robbed Me"—What Does That Mean?

"The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law." (verse 61) Look, he says **'the bands, or the snares of the wicked, the cords of the wicked, the world we live in, temptations, things that people are handing me, the bands of the wicked, they've robbed me, or surrounded me,'** literally **'they've coiled around me, but I have not forgotten thy law. I may be out there, I may be caught up in a mess, it may be all wrapped around me, it might be wrapping a hose around my arm, the wicked have coiled themselves around me, that may be going on, but in the middle, LORD, I have not forgotten thy law.'** And he says this, **"At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments."** (verse 62) **'your justice,'** he says, **'You know LORD there's this divine insomnia that plagues me sometimes.'** And if

you're compromised or away from the Lord tonight, and away from his love, the One who loved you and died for you, I pray you get divine insomnia, I pray you don't sleep until you get right, because he's waiting for you, he loves you. And because he loves you he can't let you rest without him, he can't let you sleep, he can't let you be happy. His divine love will make you miserable, and I guarantee you this, he's gonna win. It's a wrestling match. When the Trumpet blows and we all stand there, there's only going to be one God, and it ain't you. He's gonna win the wrestling match. If he's speaking to you tonight, don't let the devil tell you that his love isn't real and you can't come back. He knew the day he saved you, you were going to backslide, and he saved you anyway. [God knows the beginning from the end.] Because he knew on the cross 2,000 years ago all your sins, past, present and future had been paid for. Is that an excuse for license, no that's just carnality. But it is a liberty that we have [I don't necessarily believe that doctrinally speaking, but this is a question about proper interpretation of law & grace, which will be ironed out after the 2nd coming].

“At Midnight I Will Rise To Give Thee Thanks”

“The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law.” *“There’ve been snares, they’ve been wrapped around me, and yet I have not forgotten your law, in fact, at midnight”* understand, when it says midnight here, he doesn't have a clock, what it means is **“in the middle of the night.”** That's just the way it was. And in this culture, it was an agrarian culture, you got up early when the sun came up, you worked all day in the field and the vineyards, with the flocks, whatever you did, it started to get dark sometime around 7 O'Clock, everybody came home, you ate, you were tired from working all day, after dinner everybody sat there and looked at each other, it was dark outside, *‘Well how was your day? You know, we were together. Well ok. Honey, how was your day? Alright.’* You know, you do that for about 15 or 20 minutes, and everybody said *‘Good night, I’m going to go to bed.’* Nobody stayed up to watch Letterman, there was no cable, nobody stayed up to watch things all night long, it didn't happen. I always do that. Sunday night after four services I am so wired, I come home, and Cathy knows, *‘Don’t talk to him. He’s talked to thousands of people today, don’t talk to him.’* And I'm in another world. And then I always wake up, I pass out there [in front of the TV], and always wake up there, and then I stagger upstairs and fall in bed. None of that happened. When I was a kid, at midnight, black & white TV, the national anthem played, and then the TV turned to white snow with a hissing sound, all this static, and you just went to bed. I was always to bed by midnight, there was nothing to do. He says here, **“At midnight,”** *“in the middle of the night, LORD, sometimes you wake me up, and I*

give thanks because of your righteous judgments, in the stillness of the night, LORD, I slip to the side of my bed on my knees sometimes. Sometimes you put somebody on my heart to pray for, sometimes LORD, I'm just giving thanks. If you have insomnia, I encourage you, get on your knees and pray, if you have insomnia, you're up at 2 in the morning, can't sleep, read your Bible, you will pass out in 20 minutes. See what he wants to say to you. Then go back to bed. ***"At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments."*** (verse 62)

"I Am A Companion Of All Them That Fear Thee, And Of Them That Keep Thy Precepts"

And then wonderfully he says, this person, and I hope you can say it tonight, ***"I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts."*** (verse 63) ***'LORD, I'm messing up, I'm doing things wrong, I examined my steps, I was going the wrong way, LORD, I'm back, I made haste, I don't want to play games LORD, sometimes in the middle of the night I'm up, I'm working this out, but I'm doing this,'*** and this is what you need to do, you need to come here, you need to come, Sundays, Monday nights, Tuesday mornings, Wednesday nights, Friday nights with youth, you need to come, you don't listen to the devil telling you that you shouldn't be here, you need to come, you need to be here. Because this person can say ***"I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts."*** (verse 63) That is where you want to be. It says in ***Psalms 111, 'The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,'*** so you want to be around people that fear his name, there's wisdom there. It says in ***Proverbs 1, verse 7, 'the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.'*** So you want to be around that. That's a good thing to be around. God says in ***Jeremiah, chapter 2, verse 19,*** he says, ***'You've done this wicked thing, you've gone away, you've forsaken me, and my fear is no longer in you, so your own backslidings are going to reprove you, your own sin is going to correct you.'*** ***'The evil thing you've done,'*** he says, ***'is you've left off the fear of the LORD.'*** And it isn't torturous fear, ***it's just you want to be around people that take God seriously, you want to be around people that take God seriously,*** ***'NO, I'm not snortin' that line of Coke, because Jesus is coming! And his Word says he could come at any moment. No, I ain't gonna do that because he said he's coming! NO, we're not gonna do that, because Jesus said he's coming!'*** It says ***'The fear of the LORD is clean'*** And it says if we expect his return, that it produces a purity, it's a good thing. And for you and I, if you're hanging around Christians, don't get around the ones that say ***'I'm born-again,'*** because we hear the stories. Get around the ones that are sold out for Jesus. Get around the ones where

you can see the fruit in their life. Get around the ones that have some fear of God in their lives. Get around the ones that are gonna be healthy to be around. ***'As iron sharpens iron, so is a man with the company that he keeps.'*** And for me, I love coming here. I love the people that I get to serve with every day and work with. I love being around my kids. I get challenged by my kids once in a while. I say *'Wait a minute, I'm supposed to be saying that to you, you're not supposed to be saying that to me. I'm the pastor, who do you think you are, the pastor's kid?'* I love who I get to be around. And I encourage you guys, look, friends, strong friends, softy friends, salty friends. You want to be around Christian friends, Allen Redpath used to say *'Have some tang,'* you want some tang in your Christian friends, you want some saltiness, you want some reality in their lives, they're good for you, they're good for you...you know what the Bible says, every joint, every ligament supplies. You don't want to come to church? I think where in the world do we go from here? You know it says **"The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes." (verse 64)** Where are we going? All of this now, social drinking is like a giant thing in the Church [greater Body of Christ, not Calvary Chapels] amongst young people across the country. I don't understand. I got out of that, I got saved and the Lord took me out of all of that, took me out of drugs, took me out of alcohol, took me out of sexual sin, took me out of all of that, I got liberated when I got saved, I got set free. Now I got these young guys telling me I'm a legalist. I'm thinking *'I'm not a legalist! You're stupid!'* [loud laughter] I got set free from all that, I'm not a legalist, I don't want to be in bondage, I lived I bondage. You think it's cool to drink, I drank more in one night than you're gonna do in all your social drinking for the next month, I'd drink more in one night, and drugs, and I got set free from all of that. [btw, the Bible teaches extreme moderation for alcohol consumption, not total abstinence. But Calvary Chapels minister to those who are addicted to alcohol and drugs, so they preach abstinence so their normal members who never had a problem with any of that don't stumble those in their midst who have genuinely been set free of that bondage by the Lord. I for one, having been a functional alcoholic who could have drunk a Vodka-drinking-Russian under the table, was set free from my addiction (it was an addiction, I couldn't quit on my own) by divine miracle, from the Lord. So I agree with Calvary Chapel's policy on alcohol for their members. But if one follows the Bible's strong cautions about extreme moderation in consumption, that person will never become an alcoholic. I know personally how one becomes an alcoholic, there is a set pattern to it, which needs to be taught to all our youth.] Now what's gonna happen as recreational marijuana becomes legal? Are we gonna see people here with shades on Sunday morning, rocking out to the worship, you know? huh What are you gonna do, where's it gonna go? You know, I was out to breakfast with Jim Cymbala last week, we're friends, and he said *"I've*

written a book about "Storm" and it's coming out this fall," He said, "You wait and see, with the drinking in the Church now," he said, "with marijuana becoming more and more legal." He said, "Within a couple years we're gonna see nominal denominational churches, their youth groups are going to be meeting and smoking pot." He said, "You wait and see." Oh ya, that's the world we're living in. Get yourself friends with some tang, get yourself some snarly, grizzly, sold out *Christian on fire* friends to hang around with, they're good for you. And you don't want me smoking pot before I preach to you, 'Hey, it's not a problem, it's legal now. What, I'm not allowed to do it and you are? Cut me a break.' Every joint, every ligament supplies, I am dependent on you to walk the line and be healthy spiritually, so you can challenge me if I need it. We are dependent on one another. And the Psalmist says here, '**You know what? I've made friends and I hang around with those who fear the LORD.**' And this is somebody whose saying '**Look, I've examined my ways, I was going the wrong way.**' If you're here this evening backslidden and prodigal, it says '**Don't delay, you can turn right back,**' he put this in his Word for us, you can turn back to him tonight, you can ask his forgiveness afresh, he will put his arms around you, he will establish you, he will give you songs to sing, and make his statutes your songs in the house of your pilgrimage. You come here, you can sing about his freedom and his love, it says '**Whom he forgives the most ends up to be the one who loves him the most.**' So there is no restriction except in pride, in deception, in Satan, there is no restriction in heaven [or the Kingdom of heaven], or in the Lord Jesus Christ. The gate of grace is wide open tonight. It may not always be, it is now. So my encouragement to you is, let's have the musicians come, sing a last song, read ahead in Psalm 119, as we worship, if you want to, and you're led, you want to just come up here and pray, I encourage you to do that. Say to the person next to you, '*some of this stuff tonight was really hitting me between the eyes, would you pray for me?*' Don't be afraid to do that. Let's take some time, let's pray for one another. I really encourage you, if you're a prodigal and you're at a distance from the Lord tonight, think about your ways, turn back to him, don't delay is what it says here. His arms are open. You come tonight, you come tonight. Talk to one of the pastors, come up afterward and say '*I want to pray,*' step back into his loving arms. The entire price has been paid at the cost of heaven... [transcript of a connective expository sermon given on Psalm 119:41-64, given by Pastor Joe Focht, Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, 13500 Philmont Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19116]

related links:

God's Law gives true freedom. See,
<http://www.unityinchrist.com/whatisgrace/whatisgraceintro.htm>

What is the Gospel of Salvation? See,
<http://www.unityinchrist.com/misc/WhatIsTheGospel%20.htm>