

3 Things We Should Hate

Psalm 119:113-120

Introduction: The word “hate” which occurs more than 150 times in the Bible is a difficult word for the Christian. After all Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount not to hate our enemies but to love them (Matt. 5:43-44). And yet numerous times in Scripture we are told to hate, reject, choose against something. In our Christian circles we are often admonished to hate the sin but not the sinner. Though some would argue this is a distinction without a difference, I would disagree. C. S. Lewis, I believe, was on to something in this regard when he writes,

“Now that I come to think of it, I remember Christian teachers telling me long ago that I must hate a bad man’s actions, but not hate the bad man; or, as they would say, hate the sin but not the sinner.

For a long time I used to think this a silly, straw-splitting distinction: how could you hate what a man did and not hate the man? But years later it occurred to me that there was one man to whom I had been doing this all my life – namely myself. However much I might dislike my own cowardice or conceit or greed, I went on loving myself. There had never been the slightest difficulty about it. In fact the very reason why I hated the things was that I loved the man. Just because I loved myself, I was sorry to find that

I was the sort of man who did those thing. Consequently, Christianity does not want us to reduce by one atom the hatred we feel for cruelty and treachery. We ought to hate them. Not one word of what we have said about them needs to be unsaid. But it does want us to hate them in the same way in which we hate things in ourselves: being sorry that the man should have done such things, and hoping, if it is anyway possible, that somehow, sometime, somewhere he can be cured and made human again” (*Mere Christianity*, 117).

In stanza “Samekh,” the 15th in Psalm 119, things we should hate, detest, and despise are addressed head on. Three in particular are highlighted. They all speak to how we respond to God and his Word. If we truly want to be “human again” as Lewis said and as God designed us, we will heed well the instruction we find here.

I. We should hate the way the double-minded think 119:113-114

In Joshua 24:15 Joshua commands Israel to “choose this day whom you will serve.” The options were between the false gods of this world and of their past, and the one true God who had rescued them out of Egypt. Indecision was not an option. Double-mindedness was not an option. You can choose to follow the Lord or idols but you cannot choose both. In fact God is unimpressed with the

double-minded as James 1:5-8 makes very clear. If you are not with God you are against God (cf. Luke 11:23). Why is it that God's people should hate the double-minded? The psalmist give us two reasons.

1) They do not love God's Word

119:113

The psalmist makes a simple declaration in verse 113, "I hate the double-minded. The Hebrew word for "double-minded" occurs only here in the Old Testament. Ross notes "it describes people who are fickle, who cannot decide what they believe" (556). We get a good picture of such people in 1 Kings 18:21 where Elijah dresses down the people who are "limping" (CSB, "wavering") between following the Lord or following Baal. The psalmist says, it is a matter of the heart and what you love. If we love God's law, his Word, the ideas and philosophies of this world will have no attraction. If I love (choose) God and His Word I will hate (reject) that way of thinking which opposes Him. After all as Spurgeon well says, "The opposite of the fixed and infallible law of God is the wavering, changing opinion of men" (*TOD*, vol. 3, 355). Only a fool would choose the latter.

2) They do not hope in God's Word

119:114

The psalmist loves the Word of God and he hopes in the Word of God. His love and devotion to the law of the Lord guards his heart from being double-minded. His love for the law of the Lord also fuels hope as he finds

in God's Word both his "hiding place" and "his shield." Hiding place speaks of God's Word as his place of safety and protection. The shield points to God's Word as his protector and defender. The Word of God is a place of safety from double-mindedness. It is also a defense against hopelessness. Van Gemeren says, "The ways of the righteous and the wicked are clearly divergent" (*EBC*, vol. 5, 880). He is right. They do not think the same way, they do not love the same things, they do not trust in the same things and they do not hope in the same things. It is right to hate the ways of the double-minded.

II. We should hate evildoers that have no regard for God 119:115-117

In Psalm 1 the Word of God warns us about our associations; who we run with, who we hang out with. It instructs us to not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the company of scoffers. Our companions will impact our way of thinking, our morals and our reputations. Knowing this, the psalmist turns and addresses the double-minded whom he calls "evildoers" directly in verse 115. He then turns to plead for God's help in verses 116-117.

1) They don't obey God's commandments 119:115

The psalmist is blunt with those he calls "evildoers." He commands them to "depart" from him. We might say today "get lost!" "Move on!" "Hit the

bricks!” Why does he speak in such direct, even harsh, terms? It is because he wants to “keep the commandments of my God.” The Word of God means little or nothing to those whose life is characterized by evil. They have no respect or regard for it. In contrast the child of God has a passion for the Scriptures. He loves it (v. 113). He hopes in it (v. 114). He longs to obey it (v. 115). In Matthew 7:23 we are told that Jesus, at the judgment, will command “lawbreakers” to depart from Him forever. We do well to tell them to leave us alone today.

2) They don't trust God's promises

119:116

It is very likely that the double-minded of verse 113 who are characterized as workers of evil in verse 115 were attempting to lead the psalmist away from God and to compromise when it came to his commitments and convictions. No doubt they could be very persuasive exerting enormous pressure. To stand strong he would need God's help. He asks the Lord for two things in verse 116. First, “uphold me according to your promise that I may live.” Lord, I need you to sustain and strengthen me so that I may live every day for you. You are my protection and defense (v. 114). Evil men do not trust in the promises of your word, but I do.

Second, “let me not be put to shame in my hope!” Ross notes that the verb for shame or ashamed, “means much more than being embarrassed or made

to look silly; it is commonly used for humiliating defeats at the hands of the enemies. [The psalmist] does not want to be so humiliated and have his belief in God's word seriously discredited" (*Psalms*, vol. 3, 558). Evil men care nothing for the promises of God. The psalmist will stake his life and his reputation on them. Indeed, it is his only hope and assurance.

3) They don't rest in God's strength

119:117

Verse 117 closely parallels verse 116. The double-minded do not depend on the power and strength of the Lord, but I will says the psalmist. Continuing his prayer he asks God to "hold me up ("sustain me", CSB), that I may be safe." I lean and depend on you for support, rest and safety. You are my hiding place, shield and hope.

The psalmist's prayer again has a purpose. In verse 116 it was so that he would not be put to shame as he hopes in the Lord. In verse 117 it is so that he would "have regard for your statutes continually." Spurgeon is right, "Perseverance to the end, obedience continually, comes only through the divine power..." (*TOD* vol. 3, 357).

The psalmist requests divine power that he might honor ("have regard") God's word every day of his life. What are you resting in? What are you trusting in? Who or what is your hiding place? Continual obedience is only possible as we rest in the Lord, His promises, His strength.

III. We should hate the wicked that God will judge 119:118-120

The phrase “Judgment Day” should strike fear in the heart of every human person. The certainty of its coming is a signed, sealed and settled reality.

Evildoers and those who disregard God and His word will not always prosper and they will not escape divine judgment. Genesis 18:25 raises the question. “Won’t the Judge of the whole earth do what is just?” Verses 118-120 answer with a resounding “yes” that causes the psalmist to tremble, his skin to get goose bumps and crawl, at the very thought at what is coming for the wicked who hate God.

1) The wicked are foolish 119:118

I often say sin makes us stupid. And, it does. Verse 118 makes that point crystal clear. God spurns, rejects those who walk away from his word.

Again Ross, says, “Those who abandon the law of God have no future with God” (p. 558). And, their disobedience proves that they are playing the fool! Their cunning, their deceitfulness, is all “in vain.” It is all for nothing. They may have lied and fooled others, they may have lied and fooled themselves, but they have not fooled God! They have lived a lie and deceived themselves. They think they are fine. They think they will never give an account for their evil. Romans 1:22 could well be written on their tombstone, “Claiming to be wise, they become fools.”

2) The wicked will not last

119:119

Judgment Day is coming. You can be certain of that fact. When it does, “All the wicked of the earth will be discarded like dross.” Dross is the scum or useless material that forms on the top when precious metal is being refined by fire. It is worthless and has no value, so it is discarded and removed. *The Message* paraphrases it well, “You reject earth’s wicked as so much rubbish.” Such a terrifying reality drives the psalmist again in the right direction. It drives him to the Scriptures. For a second time (cf. v. 113) he affirms his love for God’s testimonies, his decrees. My commitment, my loyalty, is to your Word. This is what I am devoted to. After all “the grass withers and the flower fades but the Word of God endures forever” (Isa 40:8).

3) The wicked lack reverence

119:120

Considering what awaits the wicked in final, future, eschatological judgment, terrifies the psalmist. His flesh trembles. His skin gets goose bumps and crawls. We might say the thought causes the hairs on his arms to stand up. The fear he experiences as he contemplated the judgment of God is not a reverential fear. It is a real and actual fear and terror of how terrible and awesome divine judgment is. Ross once more is helpful, “The psalmist is not afraid that he might be swept away in the

judgment; he is overwhelmed and terrified at the thought of divine justice on all the ungodly” (p. 560).

Conclusion

God hates the ways of the ungodly and so should we. When they stand before the Great White Throne in Revelation 20:11-15, each and every one will be judged justly for all their works. Every single one. They will not be able to hide. They will not be able to talk their way out of the guilty verdict they will receive.

Amazingly, though God hates their evil, wicked ways, He still loves them and has made a way of escape possible. It is the way of salvation proclaimed in the gospel and accomplished by the death and resurrection of His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

We who have believed the gospel and received divine forgiveness must warn unbelievers of the wrath that is to come. We should tremble at the very thought.

We should do what we can to “snatch them out of the fire” (Jude 23) while there is still time. Judgment Day is coming.