

Our God Is The Giver Of Life

Psalm 119:153-160

Introduction: An honest assessment of the Christian Life recognizes that there are good days and bad, or difficult, days. There are hills and there are valleys. But, and we must never forget this. We cannot experience the mountaintops without walking through the valleys. And, getting to the mountaintop always involves first climbing the mountain.

The psalmist has walked many times through the valley of “affliction.” He had been forced to climb mountains called “persecutors”, “adversaries” and the “faithless.” But, along the way he discovered the life that only God can give because the Lord is faithful to give us life, to revive us, according to his promise, his word and his faithful love.

Stanza “resh” comprises verses 153-160. Three times we see the prayer, “Give me life according to . . . (vs. 154, 156, 159). The psalmist believes our God will plead his cause and redeem his life. Our God is the giver of life and he is always ready to hear our cries!

I. Ask the Lord for Life according to His promise 119:153-155

This world can be cruel and difficult. Sometimes the weight of opposition is so heavy it is almost crushing. If God does not step in and rescue us, we most certainly will not make it.

The psalmist is desperate for divine help. His desperation is clearly conveyed by the use of 5 imperatives in the first two verses of stanza resh. They are 1) Look, 2) deliver, 3) Plead, 4) redeem and 5) revive (*ESV*, “give me life”). Desperate times demand desperate actions. The lament and petitions of the psalmist are passionate and strong. And, he is certain that God is on his side and that God will hear his prayer.

1) Do not forget that the Lord is your advocate 119:153-154

The psalmist asks God to “look” or take notice of his trouble, his “affliction.” He asks the Lord to see his affliction with the hope that God will “deliver me.” He needs divine intervention. Further, he needs a divine advocate who will “plead my cause” (cf 1 John 2:1-2). This is the language of the courts and of a lawsuit. The psalmist’s pleads for Yahweh to “champion his cause” (Ross, *Psalms*, vol. 3, 581). He is confident that God will not only plead his cause, but also that the Lord will “redeem,” deliver him from his affliction. The Lord will rescue me and in the process, “give me life according to your promise!” (v. 154). God has repeatedly promised in His Word to defend and protect his people if they honor Him. The psalmist has not forgotten the law of the Lord (v. 153). He has obeyed. In fact, he loves the Word of God (v. 159).

He is confident God will deliver and revive his soul just as he has promised.

2) Do not forget that the wicked are your enemy 119:155

Verses 155 stands in stark contrast to verses 153-54. The psalmist knows the salvation of the Lord, His concern, His advocacy, His redemption, His life. Sadly, for the wicked “salvation is far” away, nowhere in sight. The wickedness of the wicked is exposed by the phrase, “they do not seek your statutes.” They have no heart, no desire, for the things of God. The life he offers is of no interest to them. His Word is something they pay no mind. What matters to God does not matter to them. Unlike the psalmist, they forget God’s law and they do not seek His statutes. This is the way of the wicked. If they stay on this path they will never find salvation. If they stay on this path a terrifying judgment and an eternal hell is their certain destiny. We who know the salvation found only in Christ must look to save them, “snatching them out of the fire” before it is too late (Jude 23).

II. Ask the Lord for life according to His judgments 119:156-158

The psalmist has asked the Lord for life, for the Lord to “revive” (*NASB*) him, according to his promise (v. 154). Now he asks the Lord for life and reviving “according to his judgments” or “rules” (*ESV*). Once again there is a positive

and negative grounding for his request. He knows the Lord's "compassions are many" (v. 156). He also knows that his "persecutors and foes are many" (v. 157). Opposition will not overwhelm him because he knows "the one who is in [me] is greater than the one, who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

1) The Lord's mercy is great 119:156

The Lord's "compassions" or "mercy" (*ESV*) are "many", they are "great" (*ESV*). Spurgeon says it beautifully, "Here the psalmist pleads the largeness of God's mercy, the immensity of his tender love. . . mercies many, mercies tender, mercies great" (*TOD*, vol. 3, 414). Because God is compassionate and looks with favor and kindness on those who are his, the psalmist, can boldly ask, "give me life according to your judgments." The psalmist's appeal is grounded in God's compassion and character. He knows the Lord's compassions are many and he knows the Lord's judgments, are trustworthy. Why? Because "the entirety of your Word is truth" (v. 160).

2) The number of our enemies is many 119:157-158

Those who love God and seek to obey him need his many mercies. Why? Because the "persecutors and foes" of v. 157, the "disloyal" (*ESV*, "faithless") of v. 158, "are many." Opposition is great and it is relentless. Those who do not seek God (v. 155) will never applaud us. They will

despise us, mock us, ridicule us. In the face of such opposition we must have the resolve of the psalmist in v. 157, “I do not swerve from your testimonies.” The faithless who ignore God and reject his truth “disgust” me (v. 158). Their agenda and goals are not mine. My love and loyalty to my Lord will be my anchor and guide my path. Compromise is not an option when it comes to my obedience to my God. Ross puts it well, “Nothing these people can say or do will make me abandon the path of righteousness laid down in God’s Word” (vol. 3, 583). This is not legalism. This is loyalty to my Lord.

III. Ask the Lord for life according to His faithful love 119:159-160

The Hebrew word “hesed” is one of the most precious and theologically rich words in all of the Bible. You see this reflected in the many ways it is translated into English: “steadfast love”, “faithful love”, “covenant love,” “loyal love,” “mercy”, “loving kindness.” The word describes, “the faithful and loving care of the covenant God for his people and their faithful love in return to him and other covenant members” (Ross, *Psalms*, vol. 1, 569). It occurs almost 250 times in the Old Testament and provides the basis for the psalmist’s third plea for life or reviving (v. 154, 156, 159).

Once again the psalmist ask the Lord to “Look on,” translated in v. 159 as “consider.” In v. 153 he asks the Lord to take a look at his afflictions and

difficulties. Now in v. 159 he asks the Lord to take a look at his love and loyalty.

1) God's Word should be loved

119:159

The psalmist loves the Word of God. It is his “consuming passion” (Boice, *Living by the Book*, 156). And, he loves the Word of God because he knows he is loved by the God of the Word. He has experienced the personal love of the covenant keeping, covenant loving God. He is loved by God and he loves God and His Word. With confidence he can ask for a third time, “Lord, give me life.” Lord, “revive me” (*NASB*). To love God is to love His Word. It is not possible to do one without the other.

2) God's Word is true

119:160

This is a powerful statement of the Bible's complete and total truthfulness. It is difficult to imagine how the psalmist could have said it any stronger. *The Message* puts it like this, “Your words all add up to the sum total: Truth.” Ross says, “the chief characteristic of God's Word is truth. Everything God has said is reliable, because he himself is the truth (see John 14:6).” (vol. 3, 584). The words inerrant and infallible capture well the psalmist's conviction about the truthfulness of Holy Scripture.

3) God's Word will endure forever

119:160

Isaiah 40:8 says, “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God will stand forever.”(ESV). The prophet and the psalmist were of one mind when it came to the enduring nature of the infallible and inerrant Word of God. Not some, not even most, is true and enduring. No, “the entirety of your Word is truth, each of the Lord’s righteous judgments endures forever.” God is forever. His word is truth. Therefore God’s Word is truth forever. Not many things last forever. Praise God, that is not true of His Word!

Conclusion

Spurgeon says, “The Scriptures are as true in Genesis as in Revelation, and the five books of Moses are as inspired as the four Gospels” (*TOD*, vol. 3, 416). What is true of the written Word is equally true of the living Word. The incarnate word, the Lord Jesus Christ, is “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). He is “the way, the truth and the life.” (John 14:6). God gives life, eternal life to all who come to Him. He has made a promise! He loves you with a steadfast and faithful love! Salvation may be far from those who love wickedness. However, it “is near you, in your mouth and in your heart. . . if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead” (Rom. 10:8-9).