

Series: Pathway Through the Psalms

LIKE A BOTTLE IN THE SMOKE

PSALMS 119:81-88

Text: Psalms 119:83

Psalm 119:83

⁸³ For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget thy statutes.

Introduction:

This is the eleventh section of Psalms 119 and the darkest of all the sections.

It is filled with pain, problems, and persecutions.

This passage reminds that if the psalmist went through such difficult times, then we should not think is strange or unusual if we experience similar trouble.

Note what we read in 1 Peter 4:

1 Peter 4:12

¹² Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

Also remember what we read in Job:

Job 14:1

¹ Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.

Understand that there is never a problem that you and I face that the Lord can't meet our needs in the midst of it and that the Lord can bring us through.

The Word of God gives these examples for our help and encouragement to guide us when we experience similar problems.

Notice:

Sermon Content:

1. THE PAINFULNESS OF TRIALS (VS. 81-83)

Psalm 119:81-83

⁸¹ My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word. ⁸² Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me? ⁸³ For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget thy statutes.

Trials and persecution hurt or it wouldn't be a trial or persecution.

Note three ways that hurt is spoken of by the psalmist.

A. The Fainting Soul (vs. 81)

Psalm 119:81

⁸¹ My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word.

Fainting is not dying, but it shows the extent of the pain upon the troubled.

Fainting shows that our strength is not enough.

It humbles and takes away pride we may have in our own strength.

Remember though the soul of the believer may faint it will never be finished off.

Note not only “The Fainting Soul” but also:

B. The Failing of the Eyes (vs. 82)

Psalm 119:82

⁸² Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?

Trials are like clouds that blot of the sun and our eyes fail to see the sun.

The outcome does not depend on our seeing the sun, but it being there.

Though we cannot see a way out, though we cannot see the whys and wherefores of our troubles, and though we cannot see any hope, our salvation and deliverance does not depend on our sight but on His promises which do not fail.

Note not only “The Fainting Soul” and the “Failing of the Eyes” but also:

C. The Fading of Life (vs. 83)

Psalm 119:83

⁸³ For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget thy statutes.

The psalmist was like a bottle or a wineskin that had been left in the smoke.

The heat and pressure had disfigured, and shriveled him.

He had become dried up.

He had become of little usefulness.

What the psalmist needed was:

Renewal and restoration that comes from remembering (vs. 83) and revival.

We have considered “The Painfulness of Trials” note secondly:

2. THE PERPLEXITY IN TRIALS (VS. 82, 84)

Psalm 119:82

⁸² Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?

Psalm 119:84

⁸⁴ How many are the days of thy servant? when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?

In the midst of trials we are often perplexed, puzzled, and even confused; things aren't right, they do not seem fair.

We often ask questions like the psalmist did here.

The questions in our texts dealt with:

A. The Duration of the Trail – “When wilt thou comfort me?” “How many are the days of thy servant?”

The psalmist is saying, "I can't take it anymore, why do you let me keep suffering." “When will it end?”

It is not easy to experience injustice, and suffering indefinitely.

During our trials we need a good perspective of the trials, or we will ask these questions about our suffering, too.

Not only did these question deal with the Duration of the P

B. The Discipline for the Trial (vs. 84)

Psalm 119:84

⁸⁴ *How many are the days of thy servant? **when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?***

One of the greatest perplexities of trials is the seeming injustice that goes on and on without God stepping in and bring judgment on the perpetrators.

You try to live right and suffer, but your persecutor lives wickedly and seems to have the upper hand.

This age will often not reflect justice, but the Scriptures tell us that justice is coming, and it will bring judgment upon the wicked forever.

From the Painfulness and Perplexity of the Trials we see thirdly:

3. THE PRAYING ABOUT TRIALS (VS. 86-88)

Psalm 119:86-88

⁸⁶ All thy commandments are faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me. ⁸⁷ They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts. ⁸⁸ Quicken me after thy lovingkindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth.

Notice:

A. What He Sought

The psalmist prayer was very simple.

Sometime because of the painfulness of the trial we may think that we must pray long drawn out prayers, but the again the psalmist prayed very simply.

- He prayed “help thou me.”

This is such a simple prayer, yet it is a very good one.

Many times the best thing we can pray in trial is "Lord help me."

We do not have to be a scholar or theologian to pray this great prayer

- He prayed “quicken me.”

Trials so sicken and so deaden our spirits till we need healing, reviving, and renewal.

We notice not only What He Sought but also:

B. What He Survived (vs. 87)

Psalm 119:87

⁸⁷ They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts.

There are two words that stand out to me in this verse – “almost” and “but”.

Though he was going through a trying time in his life, and though they had almost consumed him; he did not forsake the precepts of the Word of God.

The more the enemy attacked the more he clung to God’s Word.

This is a lesson that we all should learn well.

We will go through trails, but we should never forsake the precepts of the Word of God.

Let’s quickly consider:

4. THE PERPETRATORS OF TRIALS (vs. 85-87)

Psalm 119:85-87

⁸⁵ *The proud have digged pits for me, which are not after thy law. ⁸⁶ All thy commandments are faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me. ⁸⁷ They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts.*

The psalmist describes in detail the character of the perpetrators of his troubles.

Note:

- They are Disdainful (Full of Pride) (vs. 85)

Psalm 119:85

⁸⁵ *The **proud** have digged pits for me, which are not after thy law.*

This description of the persecutors has been given repeatedly in this psalm.

Psalm 119:21

²¹ *Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments.*

Psalm 119:51

⁵¹ *The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I*

not declined from thy law.

Psalm 119:69

⁶⁹ The proud have forged a lie against me: but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart.

Psalm 119:78

⁷⁸ Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: but I will meditate in thy precepts.

Psalm 119:85

⁸⁵ The proud have digged pits for me, which are not after thy law.

Psalm 119:122

¹²² Be surety for thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me.

Pride is often the character of evil, for pride rebels against God. Pride is also fed by the honors of the world.

Persecutors and haters of godliness are often honored by the world which only fans the flame of their pridefulness.

Note also:

- They are Defiant (vs. 85)

Psalm 119:85

⁸⁵ *The proud have digged pits for me, **which are not after thy law.***

The persecutors of the psalmist do not respect Divine law; in fact, they do not respect any law.

They are defiant and will do what they want to do regardless of what laws say.

The only laws they get excited about are laws that protect their evil deeds.

Note also:

- They are Deceitful (vs. 85)

Psalm 119:85

⁸⁵ *The proud **have digged pits for me,** which are not after thy law.*

These traps were disguised that when one would walk over them they would fall into the pit.

This was the how the psalmist illustrated the dishonesty and deception that characterized the persecutors.

The psalmist had not fallen into any pits, but he knew they were being dug for him. His path was in great peril.

Note also:

- They are Destructive (vs. 87)

Psalm 119:87

⁸⁷ They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts.

The enemy's goal is to consume and destroy the believer.

Though Satan uses people we do know that he is the chief enemy or adversary.

1 Peter 5:8

⁸ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Let me close with one final thought:

5. THE PERSISTENCY IN TRIALS (VSS. 81, 83, 86-88)

Psalm 119:81

⁸¹ My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word.

Psalm 119:83

⁸³ For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget thy statutes.

Psalm 119:86-88

⁸⁶ All thy commandments are faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me. ⁸⁷ They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts. ⁸⁸ Quicken me after thy lovingkindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth.

The psalmist, though persecuted greatly and under a great siege of trials and troubles, did not recant his loyalty to the Lord but continued to abide faithful to the Lord.

What the psalmist did should remind us what we should do in times of trials and testing.

Note:

- His Reliance of the Word (vs.81)

Psalm 119:81

⁸¹ *My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but **I hope in thy word.***

In spite of the fact his soul was fainting, he continued to have faith in the Word of God. He relied upon the Word at all times.

- His Remembrance of the Word (vs. 83)

Psalm 119:83

⁸³ *For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; **yet do I not forget thy statutes.***

Troubles can cause us to forget the Word. But the psalmist did not forget the Word of God.

His dedication to the Scriptures was strong enough to survive great troubles and distraction.

- His Respect of the Word (vs. 86)

Psalm 119:86

⁸⁶ ***All thy commandments are faithful:** they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me.*

In spite of the persecution the psalmist continued to respect the Word of God and speak highly of it.

- His Resoluteness about the Word (vs. 87-88)

Psalm 119:87-88

⁸⁷ They had almost consumed me upon earth; but **! forsook not thy precepts.** ⁸⁸ Quicken me after thy lovingkindness; **so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth.**

With great resoluteness, the psalmist stayed loyal to the Word of God in his conduct.

Close:

So this troubled soul in this trying situation becomes a trusting saint.

He says, “Lord, even though I know that everything You have to say is right and good and perfect, and even though I say yes to it all, and even though I really do want to be obedient to You - I don’t have the strength.

I need You to quicken me.

I need Your strength and power.

I need You.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Fill me with life anew,
Until I love what thou dost love,

And do what Thou wouldst do

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Until my heart is pure,
Until with Thee will one will,
To do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God
Till I'm wholly Thine,
Till all this earthly part of me,
Glows with Thy fire divine.

- Edwin Hatch