

Series: Pathway Through the Psalms

IT IS GOOD FOR ME THAT I HAVE BEEN AFFLICTED PSALMS 119:65-72

Text: Psalms 119:71

Psalm 119:71

⁷¹ It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.

Introduction:

Most of us would probably not make such a statement about being afflicted. Most of us would not consider it a good but rather the opposite not so good.

There are a number of verses in the Bible about afflictions. We do well to study these texts for they will teach us many valuable truths that will stop our complaining so much about our trials and troubles.

A combination of the words afflict; afflictions; and afflicted occurs 143 times in 138 different verses.

The text before us is one of those texts on afflictions which teaches us many valuable lessons.

With a proper perspective life has but one pattern, and outlook.

That is; “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.”

To see the Lord is a revolutionary experience. An individual will never be the same again after this experience.

Illustrations:

As Stephen drew his last breath; he died with words of forgiveness on his lips as he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

Saul of Tarsus renounced both pedigree and purpose when he saw the Saviour.

Isaiah bust into confession of being a man with unclean lips when he saw the Lord high and lifted up.

Ephraim discarded his idols and declared, “I have heard Him and observed Him.

Job emerged from his trial triumphant and hopeful saying, “I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee.”

In this passage the psalmist has caught a similar vision.

The psalmist stated that it was good that he had been afflicted.

Though we don't know what the source or substance of the affliction was the psalmist knew it was good and he gives us the reason why it was good – "That I might learn thy statutes.

Understand:

The loss of a function or a privilege often proves to be the starting point to spiritual development.

With Moses – He chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

Few choose to suffer but those who do understand that the Lord is able to bring them through the valley.

We will consider two thoughts from this passage this evening.

Note:

Sermon Content:

1. THE BENEFIT OF AFFLICTION

Affliction may be considered a bad thing but if one can see the benefits resulting from it they would understand it to be good.

There are some things good but not pleasant, as sorrow and affliction. Sin is pleasant, but unprofitable; and sorrow is profitable, but unpleasant. As waters are purest when they are in motion, so saints are generally holiest when in affliction.

Notice:

A. It Opens Our Ears to Instruction

Most often when one finds themselves in the valley of affliction they are more apt to listen.

Affliction often causes an individual to listen to the instruction of the Lord.

Notice also:

B. It Makes Us Sensible of Our Need of Better Things Than This World Can Give

In the midst of affliction an individual their taste for earthly gratification is weakened.

Amusement and company lose their enjoyment, and something more substantial is longed for.

Something on which the soul may rest.

Illustration: The Prodigal Son

While with substance he had company and celebration, but he had wasted his substance with riotous living there arose a mighty famine and then he found himself hungry and humbled.

We wanted something more that his money couldn't buy and his so called friends couldn't provide.

The Bible tells us that he arose and came to his father.

When we find ourselves in the valley of affliction we too should come to our Heavenly Father, and gives us the best robe and things that we need.

Notice it not only "Opens Our Ears to Instruction" and "Makes Us Sensible to Our Need of Better Things than This World Can Give" but also:

C. It Drives Us to God in Prayer

Those who never pray in their time of prosperity are often stirred to seek the Lord in seasons of adversity.

Note:

Psalm 107:4-6

⁴ They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. ⁵ Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. ⁶ **Then** they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.

Psalm 107:10-13

¹⁰ Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; ¹¹ Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High: ¹² Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help. ¹³ **Then** they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses.

Psalm 107:16-19

¹⁶ For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder. ¹⁷ Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. ¹⁸ Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. ¹⁹ **Then** they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses.

Psalm 107:23-28

²³ They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; ²⁴ These see the works of the

LORD, and his wonders in the deep. ²⁵ For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. ²⁶ They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. ²⁷ They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. ²⁸ **Then** they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.

Hosea 5:15

¹⁵ I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: **in their affliction they will seek me early.**

Isaiah 26:16

¹⁶ LORD, in trouble have they visited thee, **they poured out a prayer** when thy chastening was upon them.

If we are honest many are more serious about praying when things are serious more so than when things are running smoothly.

Notice it not only “Opens Our Ears to Instruction” “Makes Us Sensible to Our Need of Better Things than This World Can Give” and “It Drives Us to God in Prayer’ but also:

D. It Can Bring One to a Saving Knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ

When an individual is willing to receive instruction and long for what the world cannot provide, there is hope that the individual will be brought to the Lord in their search.

Illustration: Manasseh

Notice:

- The Rebellion of Manasseh (2 Chronicles 33:2-9)

2 Chronicles 33:2-9

² But did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. ³ For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. ⁴ Also he built altars in the house of the LORD, whereof the LORD had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever. ⁵ And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. ⁶ And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. ⁷ And he set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, In

this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever: ⁸ Neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers; so that they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses. ⁹ So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

- The Retribution of Manasseh (2 Chronicles 33:6, 10-11)

2 Chronicles 33:6

⁶ And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

2 Chronicles 33:10-11

¹⁰ And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken. ¹¹ Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon.

It's no surprise that retribution came a result of Manasseh's vile practices.

Notice the cause of the retribution (vs. 6)

2 Chronicles 33:6

*⁶ And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: **he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.***

- The Repentance and Restoration of Manasseh (2 Chronicles 33:12-13)

2 Chronicles 33:12-13

¹² And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, ¹³ And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God.

His affliction brought him to the Lord.

Any affliction that brings one to salvation and peace with God should never be dreaded or despised but rather embraced and enjoyed.

Now we have considered the Benefits of Affliction but note also:

2. THE BLESSING OF KNOWLEDGE

Psalm 119:71

⁷¹ *It is good for me that I have been afflicted; **that I might learn thy statutes.***

The knowledge that we are speaking of, the knowledge of God and His statutes is indeed valuable beyond comprehension.

Note:

- Solomon stated:

Proverbs 23:23

²³ *Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.*

If affliction brings us to the knowledge of the truth, it truly is a blessing.

Note also:

- Paul stated:

Philippians 3:8

⁸ *Yea doubtless, and **I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:** for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,*

Paul counted all things but loss for the knowledge of Christ.

We too should understand the value of this knowledge and if affliction is the vehicle that delivers us to it then we should be willing to take the ride.

Close:

The rod under which an individual is afflicted has a voice to which we should listen to and give all attention.

Micah 6:9

⁹ *The LORD'S voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.*

Understand it is sent in love and mercy.

God designs to teach us by means of it, many things that we would or could never learn without it.

It maybe that you have already been instructed in the Gospel but there is are still some things that we are needing instruction in.

My we be content to have God's work carried out and perfected and considered it a blessing and not a burden to obtain that which affliction can bring to us – knowledge of Christ and His statues.

Romans 5:1-5

¹ Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: ² By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³ And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; ⁴ And patience, experience; and experience, hope: ⁵ And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

James 1:2-4

² My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; ³ Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. ⁴ But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.