

Monday, May 20, 2019—Psalm 119

S.M. Lockridge once preached a stirring sermon entitled “That’s My King.” In it he stirringly described Jesus and His life-changing power and character. He continually asked whether the listener knew Jesus. After several minutes, he lamented, “I wish I could describe him to you!” The irony is rich. He had used so many words already to describe Him, yet there was so much more to say and so many things that could never be said.

If S.M. Lockridge had written a song about the Law of God, Psalm 119 would be that song. The writer used the Hebrew alphabet and began 22 sections of eight lines each with the successive letter of the alphabet. He was captured by the life-changing truth of the Law and the life-giving grace God demonstrated in giving the Law to His people.

While the Law seems a burden to me, he knew those who obeyed God’s commands would be happy (119:1-8). The Law leads to purity and wisdom (119:9-24). Living by God’s standards leads to freedom rather than restriction—freedom from the love of money, the bondage of sin, and the pursuit of worthless things (119:25-48). Within His Law, His people find His promises and their identity (119:49-64). The Law teaches how much God loves His people and sustains them through suffering (119:65-96).

The Law is a source of wisdom, direction, and protection, so the Psalmist has come to love it with all he is (119:97-128). Seeing others disregard and disobey fills him with rage (119:129-144). His truth is the source of hope for justice and restoration (119:145-176).

Praise Him today for revealing His life-giving Truth to you. Sunday, May 19, 2019—Psalms 115-118

The month of May includes graduation ceremonies for students in kindergarten through graduate school. Those observing the ceremonies and reviewing the pictures often comment on how quickly time has passed. The baby is now an adult, the graduate process is finally over, or other realities become sobering reminders that time marches steadily onward.

In Psalm 115, the Psalmist knew that time indeed marched onward and that, one day, life ends. “The dead cannot sing praises to the Lord, for they have gone into the silence of the grave” (115:17). The living, therefore, needed to make the most of each day. “We can praise the Lord both now and forever!” (115:18). He knew the magnitude of God’s unfailing love and faithfulness, so he wanted to glory to go to Him and Him alone (115:1). The surrounding nations worshiped gods that were imagined by man and without any power to save (115:6). Yahweh was a true helper and shield.

He listens to His people’s prayers and answers them (116:1). He is good and kind and merciful (116:5). True belief leads His people to trust Him, love Him, and pray to Him. His faithfulness stirs them to keep their promises to Him (116:14,18).

His goodness and enduring love cause His people to praise Him (117:1-2). They know, “The Lord is for me, so I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?” (118:6). His people understand He will correct them but never leave them (118:28). He is good and deserves thanks.

Make the most of the day. Give thanks to God for His goodness.

Saturday, May 18, 2019—Psalms 112-114

Tyrants rule their people with an iron fist. They rarely began their rule that way as they likely had to gain the favor or many before they could take control. Once in power, however, they think only of promoting their agenda and demanding obedience. The people fear them but have no love.

Psalm 112 says those who fear the Lord are happy. How can this be? Their relationship is not with a tyrant but with a God who is slow to anger and abounding in love. He wants complete obedience and no compromise, yet His people “delight in doing what he commands” (112:1). They know He provides and remembers their good deeds. He brings light in the darkness and shapes them into people of outstanding character. “They do not fear bad news; they confidently trust the Lord to care for them” (112:7). They are confident and generous, and they infuriate the evil ones who live around them and want them to fail. Fearing God is good.

Psalm 113 calls on the people to praise God because He is beyond comparison. There is no other god like He is. He can take the poorest and set him among princes (113:7-8) and give barren women children. Creation bows before Him and does His bidding (114:3-8). His people can have complete confidence in His ability to change circumstances and fulfill the promises He makes to His people (114:1-2).

Praise God for who He is and what He has done. Pray for a growing desire to obey and a delight in that obedience.

Friday, May 17, 2019—Psalms 109-111

God is not afraid of our emotions. He created us. He knows us. When we are willing to express our true feelings to Him, we can compare those temporary situations to the eternal weight of His glory. We can rely on Him to be the one to resolve the problem and heal our souls.

The Psalmist was troubled because he prayed for the very people who were trying to destroy him (109:4). He asked God to bring discomfort and destruction on these people (109:6-20). These people were detrimental to the glory and mission of God. In contrast, he asked God to work in his life for the sake of God's own reputation (109:21), not his personal comfort or success. He wanted God to do things that would make God famous. He was weak, but God could save him and show His greatness as a result (109:27). He humiliates the proud and rescues the needy (109:29-31).

God also works for the success of the powerful. Psalm 110 was the song the people sang when they crowned a new king. Rich or poor, slave or king—God will work through anyone who is humble before Him. Everything God does is just and good (111:7), so all those who delight in Him should ponder all He has done to enjoy Him more. This reverence is the foundation of wisdom, and its rewards come to the obedient (111:10).

Praise God for allowing His people to express every care to Him. Make time to ponder who He is and what He has done.

Thursday, May 16, 2019—Psalm 106-108

In 1984, Clive Wearing contracted a virus that robbed him of his memory. He remained able to communicate and play the piano, yet he had no ability to remember things for any length of time. The inability to remember has devastating effects.

Psalm 106 speaks to this. The people of God had seen His great miracles to free them from slavery, yet they soon forgot His greatness and His many acts of kindness (106:7,13,21) and rebelled against Him. Even so, He remained kind. Repeatedly, they followed other gods and participated in evil, yet He pitied them and delivered them (106:43-44). While His people are forgetful, God does not forget His promises and responsibilities.

Those who have experienced this amazing grace and love should say so (107:2). “Let them praise the Lord for his great love and for all his wonderful deeds to them. For he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things” (107:8-9). He disciplines those who are wandering so they might come back to Him and experience His fullness. He frees those who are captive so they might enjoy His liberty. The wise look to the past to see His faithfulness and look to the future to live in faithfulness (107:43).

The forgetful will soon trust themselves and their plans, but the mindful always surrender to Him. “My heart is confident in you, O God . . . With God’s help we will do mighty things, for he will trample down our foes” (108:1,13). Remember His faithfulness and praise Him today.

Wednesday, May 15, 2019—Psalms 103-105

If someone were to walk into a movie theater and watch a minute or two of a movie and then realize they were in the wrong theater, they would quickly get up and go to the correct location. They would say, “I was wrong in the wrong place.” They would never think of saying, “That was a terrible movie. The main character was a jerk, and the plot was senseless.”

Many people treat God this way, however. They read one story in Scripture that makes them uncomfortable or see a believer who isn’t a worthy representative and decide God is angry or Christianity is false. Many will read the Old Testament

or hear people discuss it and conclude that God is angry, blood-thirsty, and manipulative.

Psalm 103 gives a fantastic picture of all that God is. He forgives. He heals. He surrounds His own with love and tender mercies. He fills their lives with good things and renews strength. He works righteousness and justice and is slow to anger and abounding in love. He removes sin and guilt as far as the east is from the west and treats His people like a father treats children because He understands how weak His people truly are (103:14). Their lives are brief, but His love remains forever. This is a great God!

Nature obeys Him and depends on Him (104:1-22). Life is not possible without Him. "Give thanks to the Lord and proclaims his greatness" (105:1). He provides so people can walk in His way (105:45).

Pray for a fuller picture of who God is so you can worship Him.

Tuesday, May 14, 2019—Psalms 100-102

Children enjoy digging through trunks and boxes filled with old clothes and costumes to play "dress up." They imagine themselves as superheroes, cowboys, princesses, and movie stars. Their assumed identity affects their outward activity. Eventually, it all goes back in the box.

The Psalmist imagined himself and his people as the sheep of God's pasture. While this may seem degrading or outdated, the Psalmist was keenly aware of the great care good shepherds had for their flocks. Knowing they were created by God and watched over by Him, the people could enter His courts with thanksgiving and praise and shouts of joy. He was perfectly good, and His love for them endured forever (100:1-5).

Knowing the desire of God for truth and integrity because He Himself was truth, His people seek the same. Identity leads to activity. The Psalmist pledged a life of integrity and of avoiding all that was evil (101:2-5). He wanted to go beyond himself and promote integrity and virtue within his city, watching over the godly and uprooting the scandalous and deceptive (101:6-8). He promised to sing of God's love and justice as he sought the same, but he admitted he remained in need of

God's deliverance (101:2b). The life of integrity has no promise of being easy.

Psalm 102 speaks of this struggle (102:1-11) but affirms the eternal reign of God (102:12,26-28). His people, therefore, can trust He will help them, so they, in turn, can live in ways to help the poor and needy.

Praise God for His love and justice. Live to promote them both.