

FAITH SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

June 27, 2010

“Listening and Living by the Law of God”

Central Idea: The Psalter, which is the collection of the Psalms, is rich in worship, theology, and application. There is a very personal nature to the Psalms as though you are reading a person’s personal conversations with God. It is important to remember that each Psalm was written in a particular context because that context informs what the Psalmist is saying to and about God. It is just as important to remember that the Psalms are part of the inspired Word of God and primarily they are God’s revelation of who He is and who we should be in response.

Lesson Idea: Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in all of Scripture yet the focus is fairly narrow. The entire chapter is about the Law. The Psalmist uses eight different words to refer to everything from the Law of Moses, the Ten Commandments and the Law as laid out in Deuteronomy. In general the Psalmist is speaking of his love for and obedience to the revealed word of God. We should have a heart to know and do what God says. This heart is developed through reading and living in His word.

Historical Context: Most likely writing in the postexilic era, the psalmist knows firsthand the oppression of evil. He has been surrounded by wickedness, pursued by the arrogant and proud, humbled by sorrow and disgrace; yet his refuge is in God. He constantly cries out to God, retreats into his shadow, and finds solace in his strength. This is a psalm, not only of law, but of love, not only of statute, but of spiritual strength, not only of devotion to precept, but of loyalty to the way of the Lord. The beauty in this psalm resounds from the relationship of the psalmist and his God.

VanGemeren, Willem A. “Psalm 119: The Joy of God’s Law in Distress” In *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*: Volume 5. 736. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, © 1991.

Bible in a Year Daily Readings

June 21st - June 27th, 2010

June 21st Psalms 89-94

June 22nd Psalms 95-103

June 23rd Psalms 104-106

June 24th Psalms 107- 111

June 25th Psalms 112- 118

June 26th Psalm 119

June 27th Psalms 120-133

The Form of Psalm 119

In the original Hebrew the author of Psalm 119 uses an acrostic to form the message of the Psalm. Each stanza, set of verses, follows a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in order from Aleph to Taw (like our A to Z). From literary point of view this is a remarkable achievement. For us it displays the unique and detailed nature of Scripture that God inspired various persons and personalities to take down.

Below is an excerpt of the Hebrew translation of this Psalm. It is written from right to left and you can see the same symbol (Hebrew letter) begins every line and then changes to the next letter for the next set of stanzas. For space purposes I have include the first three stanzas and not the whole passage.

א וְשָׂרִי נָצַר, יַעֲדֶנּוּ יוֹ בְּקִלְלָהּ, בְּיַדְשִׁיהֶוּ:

³ א. ה' לא־פָעַל, ו' עוֹלָה בְּדַרְכֵי, יו' הַלְכוּ:

⁴ א. תָּה צוֹ, יִתֶּה פֶקֶד' יְהוָה לְשֹׁמֵר מֵאָדָם:

⁵ א. חֲלִי יִכְ, גו' דָּרְכֵי יִשְׁמֵר חֲקִיהֶוּ:

⁶ א. ז' לֹא־אֵב, וְשׁ בִּי הַבֵּיט יִשְׁמֵר מִצְוֹתֶיהֶוּ:

⁷ א. וְדָדָה בִּי, שֶׁר לִבִּי בִּי לְמַד יִשְׁפֹּט, יִצְדָקָהוּ:

⁸ אֶת־חֲקֵי, יְהוָה אֲשֶׁמֶר, אֶל־תַּעֲזוּב, גו' עַד־מֵאָדָם:

ב וְשֵׁם, ה' יִזְכֹּרֶנּוּ, עַר אֶת־אֲרָחָהּ, ו' ל' שְׁמֵר כְּדַבְרָהוּ:

¹⁰ בְּקִלְלָהּ, יִדְרֹשֶׁת, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי, שְׁגֹגִים מִמִּצְוֹתֶיהֶוּ:

¹¹ ב. לִבִּי צַפַּ, גְּתִי אִמְרֹתֶיהֶוּ, ד' ל' מ' עוֹלָה, אֶת־אֲרָחָהּ:

¹² בְּרִי, וְיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי, ה' יִתְּנֵה לְפָנַי, גו' חֲקִיהֶוּ:

¹³ בְּשֹׁפֶת, יִסַּף, רְתִי בִּי ל' מִשְׁפָּטֵי־חַיִּיהֶוּ:

¹⁴ בְּדָרְהָ, עֲדוּתִי, יְהוָה שִׁשְׁתִּי, קַע, ל' כְּלִי־הַיַּיִן:

¹⁵ בְּפִקְדוֹתֶיהֶוּ, יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר יִסָּה, וְאֵב יִטָּה אֶרְחֹמֶיהֶוּ:

¹⁶ בְּחֻקֹתֶיהֶוּ, יְהוָה אֲשֶׁמֶשֶׁשׁ, ע' ל' אֲשֶׁפֶח, ח' דְבָרָהוּ:

17 גִּמְלוֹת, ל' עֲלֵי־עַבְדֶּיהֶוּ, אֲחִי־הוּא וְאֲשֶׁמֶר, ה' דְבָרָהוּ

¹⁸ גִּלְעָדִים, יִנְאָב, וְיָסָה בִּי פִלְאֵה וְתִמְחֹרֶתֶיהֶוּ:

¹⁹ גִּרְאֵנִי, יִבְאֵר, רִצֵּן אֱלֹהֵי־מִסְתָּר, מ' מ' נִי מִצְוֹתֶיהֶוּ:

²⁰ גִּרְסָה, ה' נִפְשִׁי, יִלְמָאָב, ה' אֱלֹהֵי־מִשְׁפָּט, יְהוָה בְּכִלְעֵת:

²¹ גִּרְסָה, זֶד, יִם אֲרוּרִים, ה' יִשְׁגִּים מִמִּצְוֹתֶיהֶוּ:

²² גִּלְמֵי, ל' מְעֵלֵי חֲרָפָה, ה' וְב, וְז' כ' יִעֲדֶנּוּ, יְהוָה נִצְרָתִי:

¹¹⁹ *All the wicked of the earth you discard like dross; therefore I love your statutes.*

¹²⁰ *My flesh trembles in fear of you; I stand in awe of your laws.*

QUESTIONS

1. What are characteristics of the wicked?
2. How can someone be “double minded?”
3. How has the Lord been your shield?
4. The Psalmist speaks here and other places of the shelter of the Tabernacle. Where is our tabernacle of shelter?

According to God’s Love

Psalm 119:121-128

¹²¹ *I have done what is righteous and just; do not leave me to my oppressors.*

¹²² *Ensure your servant’s well-being; let not the arrogant oppress me.*

¹²³ *My eyes fail, looking for your salvation, looking for your righteous promise.*

¹²⁴ *Deal with your servant according to your love and teach me your decrees.*

¹²⁵ *I am your servant; give me discernment that I may understand your statutes.*

¹²⁶ *It is time for you to act, O LORD; your law is being broken.*

¹²⁷ *Because I love your commands more than gold, more than pure gold,*

¹²⁸ *and because I consider all your precepts right, I hate every wrong path.*

QUESTIONS

1. The Psalmist gives reasons for God’s blessings of deliverance. What are they?
2. Have you ever felt like your “eyes failed” looking for God’s salvation?
3. What is discernment and how is it displayed?
4. What wrong paths do you have trouble hating?

APPLICATION

As followers of Christ, if we stop following God’s word we stop being true followers. Often the path to God is darkened by circumstances and/or our own sin. We must dig into God’s word for light to stay on His path. This takes single mindedness and a growing love for who God is according to His Word.