

THE VICTORY LIFE

in

PSALM 119

by

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CHAPTER SEVEN

SPIRITUAL ASSETS

ZAIN

“Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.

This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.

The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from thy law.

I remembered thy judgments of old, O LORD; and have comforted myself.

Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law.

Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.

I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night, and have kept thy law.

This I had, because I kept thy precepts” (Psalms 119:49-56)

“This I had” (Psalm 119:56).

IT IS INVENTORY TIME. All clear-thinking people, at certain intervals, take note of their possessions and accomplishments. Unless stark poverty has moved into one’s economic realm or grim disaster into one’s activities, each one can say, “This is what I have.” Be the items ever so few and their value ever so slight, one may say, “This is what I have.”

But what is the reader’s inventory in the sphere where values are eternal? What do you have?

The difference between what God provides and what we possess should produce an incentive to press on — ever on!

Every Christian leader should urge the believer to possess his possessions. Observe how the inimitable Moses, meek but mighty, sought to wave his people down the home-stretch to victory.

“Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee,” he appealed, “go up and possess it!”

But neither under his leadership nor under that of his successor did the people manifest much disposition to press on. As Joshua's day of faithful service was ebbing to its close, the Lord had this to say, "**Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet much land to be possessed.**"

Returning to the writer of Psalm 119, we find him in a very pensive mood. He is engaged in some serious calculations. At the moment, he is completing a delineation of acquirements. The line is drawn, as it were, and the total is to be discovered.

"**This I had**" (v. 56), he says, meditatively.

And what is the subject of his consideration? His spiritual blessings. He is attempting to prove to himself that, in spite of his failure to rise to the desired heights, it has not all been loss. He is sure he has made some gains through the years. But what does the tabulation reveal? We shall notice for ourselves beginning with the opening verse of the stanza.

"**Thou hast caused me to hope**" (v. 49), he maintains.

To begin with, he had hope.

Love may be more highly evaluated than hope in Paul's classical dissertation of I Corinthians 13, but hope, with faith, is one of the abiding assets in the breast of a believing person. Man is a migrant. The most unusual changes come upon him suddenly and when he least expects. Definite programs are smashed by hands we never see.

We need hope to face the uncertainties of life. We must have hope to spur us on. Fainting hearts result from the absence of hope, or from the disillusioning let-down of false hope. Yes, he had hope. He is glad to list it in his spiritual inventory. But does not the weakest believer have hope? Hope, in itself, is not enough.

"**This is my comfort**" (v. 50), he adds next in the list.

He has comfort, too.

He needs comfort as well as hope. Who does not require comfort? When Jesus saw the saddened disciples in heaviness of heart just prior to His death, He explained that it was to their advantage that He depart in order that the Comforter might come — the One who would be with them always!

Always? Yes, for we shall ever require comfort. As a new and necessary message for the prophet, God instructed Isaiah to "**comfort ye, comfort ye my people,**" at the same time assuring His servant, "**It is I, even I, that comforteth thee.**"

The Lord is the source of all comfort as He is the source of all grace, "**Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble.**"

While the psalmist does not reveal the nature of his affliction (v. 50), he nevertheless gives us to understand that he has been subjected to severe trial. This, of course, is not surprising. Let anyone, especially a youth, serve notice against Satan that there must be a definite, once-for-all cleavage between them, that the course of righteousness is to be followed henceforth, and the wicked adversary who hindered Paul will at once begin to make the going rough indeed. But witness carefully what gives this youthful person the stamina to press on. It is not the “breakfast of champions” which children hear about today, but rather the heavenly food of overcomers.

“Thy word hath quickened me” (v. 50), he testifies.

This wonderful Word of Truth which is forever settled in Heaven has lost none of its sustaining power. It can enliven today. It can stimulate and sustain regardless of the tests.

“The proud have had me greatly in derision” (v. 51), he confesses.

Notice the tense of the verb. He has survived some distressing experiences. The word **“greatly”** suggests this fact. The mockery and scorn to which he had been subjected pressed him beyond measure. His tempters were cruel; their schemes were wicked; but amid it all he did not renounce God’s Word.

“I have not declined from thy law” (v. 51), he rigidly insists.

It is possible, you know, for a pugilist to have swollen eyes, bleeding nose and bruised flesh, yet emerge from the ring a champion. Never fear the wounds which might be sustained in a conflict with the Devil. The victory is all the sweeter if it entails some hardship. Paul gladly and willingly bore about in his body the marks (stigma) of the Saviour, and rendered thanks unto **“God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

“I remember thy judgments of old, O Lord, and have comforted myself” (v. 52), is the psalmist’s prayerful affirmation.

When did he comfort himself in this manner? Apparently when the proud had him in derision — in his times of testing. What could possibly encourage one more than a remembrance of the Word of God in any hour of desperate need?

When Alice of Cranbrook was cast into the dark dungeon for her devotion to the Lord and to His Truth, her recorded trials are almost imponderable. Dense darkness, dampness, creeping things, weird sounds, scant unpalatable food, little water — these were but a few of the terrifying circumstances thrust upon her.

Almost incessantly, her persecutors called upon her to recant. Like the brainwashing of modern brutality, such tormenting bore heavily upon her physical and mental reserves. At her weakest moment, she remembered Psalm 42:11: **“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him.”**

Few people have learned experientially the encouraging force of this wonderful, wonderful Book which we joyfully call the Bible.

“Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law” (v. 53), he explains.

He had deep concern for others. This is compassion. A casual glance at the first six words in this statement would give us the impression that he is the victim of a terrible plight, but not so. He reveals why he is seized with horror. He is thinking of others.

- What do they do in perplexing circumstances?
- What do they do in time of deep sorrow?
- What will they do when the icy arm of death reaches forth inevitably to snatch them away?

He has compassion for them. When one begins to consider others with such concern of heart, one is forgetting self. He is moving in a good direction, for

Whoso bears another's burden;
Whoso shares another's woe;
Brings his frankincense to Jesus
With the men of long ago.

What is going to be the end of those who forsake the Word of God? Does it not concern us? How much do we feel a burden for the unbeliever?

If our eyes were sufficiently open to see the interminable stream of humanity pouring into the dark abyss of a lost eternity, surely horror would lay hold upon us too. If we could look into this young man's mind, perhaps we might discover that part of this seizure of horror is attributable to a recollection of his own neglect of God's Word in days gone by.

At any rate, he manifests concern for others. We hope that someone was or is concerned about you who read these lines.

We come now to a rather melodious note. We learn for the first time that this individual is a singer. At least, he makes reference to singing.

“Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage” (v. 54), his notation reads.

This world to the believer is only the place of his pilgrimage. How blessed to sing enroute through the wilderness to that Home eternal in the heavens where singing gladdens the atmosphere endlessly!

That will be a Home without discord, a Home where love knows no fluctuations, where tears will never I flow, where discipline is non-existent (all because it is unnecessary), and a Home where there will be no more parting.

“When the Eastern traveler takes shelter from the scorching heat or halts for the night at some caravansary, which is for the time the house of his pilgrimage, he soothes his rest with a song — a song it may be of war, romance, or love. But the poet of Israel finds his theme in the statutes of the Lord God . . . not songs of old tradition have supported me, but these have been the solace of my weary hours and the comfort of my rest” (Bushnell).

Whatever may have been the variety and severity of this young man’s experiences, he makes it clear that through them all he remembered the name of the Lord (v. 55), and this was his constant consolation in the night — not only the night of physical darkness, but the night of trial as well.

If he were singing to us in this day of our pilgrimage, it most likely would be,

“Take the name of Jesus with you,
Child of sorrow and of woe;
It will joy and comfort give you.
Take it then whene’er you go.”

There is both honesty and humility in this whole account. It is personal, of course, but it has great practical value for us. Throughout, he ascribes to the Word of God utility and blessing — a further proof that the Scriptures fully furnish and pleasantly satisfy.

~ end of chapter 7 ~

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