

Truth Talk Truth Talk

Psalm 119 – The Word for Life!

Resolved: To Live for God by His Strength and Not My Own

Stanza 6 – Verses 41-48

(Part 2)

Let Your mercies come also to me, O LORD -- Your salvation according to Your word. ⁴² So shall I have an answer for him who reproaches me, For I trust in Your word. ⁴³ And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, For I have hoped in Your ordinances. ⁴⁴ So shall I keep Your law continually, Forever and ever. ⁴⁵ And I will walk at liberty, For I seek Your precepts. ⁴⁶ I will speak of Your testimonies also before kings, And will not be ashamed. ⁴⁷ And I will delight myself in Your commandments, Which I love. ⁴⁸ My hands also I will lift up to Your commandments, Which I love, And I will meditate on Your statutes.

In the previous edition of *Truth Talk* we noted that this sixth stanza contains two passionate pleas from the Psalmist in which he beseeches God for grace to declare God's truth confidently (vv. 41-42) and credibly (vv. 42-48) in the face of strong opposition. Our focus was narrowed to the first of those petitions, a plea for grace to declare God's truth confidently.

We discovered that this plea, though articulated in desperate circumstances, sprang from a heart confident in God's Word and resting on God's promise. And this confidence anticipated a deliverance sourced in or "according to" God's Word. In other words, as the Psalmist considered his dire circumstance he recognized the solution was in God's Word. And in this Word from God he found "words" of his own with which to answer his oppressors. Consequently he reaffirmed his confident reliance on the divinely inspired Word that revealed to him God's reliability and faithfulness in the performance of His Own Word.

After pleading with God for grace to declare God's Word confidently in the midst of his oppressors, the Psalmist's unshakable confidence in God's promise led him to express a second plea – one for credibility in life as he declared God's truth before His oppressors (vv. 43-48).

II. A Plea for Grace to Declare God's Truth Credibly (vv. 43-48)

The Psalmist prayed that God's Word would not be taken from him as he answers the "words" against him with a "word" from God's Word. The implication of this petition is that God's Word might be removed from him through a loss of credibility by some act of disobedience or faithlessness on his part. Hence his commitment to "wait on" or to do and obey God's commandments or "ordinances" (v. 43). Again, this isn't a desperate plea coming from a heart of doubt. The phrase, "I wait" is parallel to his earlier declaration of trusting in God's Word. It highlights the Psalmist's confident expectation that God will fulfill all of His righteous judgments and that when God does so, he will find relief.

This confidence in God's fulfillment of what He has ordained led the Psalmist to do more than merely affirm God's faithfulness. Confidence in God's faithfulness prompted faithful behavior in the Psalmist (v. 44)! And the first and foremost expression of this faithful behavior was his lifelong

commitment to consistently obey God's Word (v. 44). As he "waited" confidently on God's judgments this produced in him a spiritual consistency marked by a lifelong pattern of spiritual obedience.

But what was the result of such lifelong obedience? Freedom in life – both in walk (v. 45) and witness (v. 46)! Paradoxically, the restraint the Psalmist exercised in being governed by obedience to God's Word brought about liberty and unrestrained freedom in his walk with God as well as in his witness for God. Therefore, it is not surprising that he committed himself afresh to living within the constraints of God's precepts (v. 45). Without question submission to the "orders" of a superior, in this case God, is in view. In fact, obedience to these orders or "precepts" from God became his lifelong preoccupation.

The fruit of this preoccupation was more than just a freedom in his life and walk with God but also a freedom and boldness to declare God's Word to anyone anywhere, even to the king (v. 46). Again, if Daniel is the author, we can see how this unfolded. His submission to God's Word constantly and continuously was the occasion used against him by the wicked words of his oppressors. But, a Word from God shut the mouth of the lions and set Daniel at liberty with a "word" by which to answer his oppressors. He walked confidently and credibly before God and consequently, God gave Daniel great liberty to speak God's Word to the king! And he did so without fear of failure – either on his part or on the Lord's to live up to God's Word.

Such unfettered freedom and such bold and assured confidence led the Psalmist to deep inner personal life satisfaction and worthy worship (v. 47-48). The Word of God which produced this freedom became his chief delight. The commandments of God and their ensuing obligations were not burdensome to him; they were his delight! Therefore, he longed for more of God's Word. The image of "stretching out hands" is one of reaching out in longing to grasp more of something (v. 48).

This longing naturally drove the Psalmist to mediate more thoroughly over God's commandments and to value God's statutes more ardently (v. 48). This preoccupation with God's Word had life shaping implications. How would his life have the credibility necessary to declare God's Word boldly? Such credibility would come as his life was shaped by and conformed to God's Word.

So this section is really about how a man of God can live more confidently and freely for God in the midst of very aggressive and antagonistic enemies. Only by God's grace can he survive and thrive! Only in God's Word will he find a timely and right response. Only as his life is shaped by and conformed to God's Word will his "word" be validated.

If we are to experience the freedom and liberty of soul and life described here, we will have to turn to the same source as did the Psalmist and we will have to embrace a similar commitment to lifelong personal obedience rendered joyfully to God from a heart that delights in His Word!

And what will make such living delightful is both a deep love for God who gave this Word and a personal experiencing of the freedom, boldness, and spiritual satisfaction that comes from such obedience! May the Lord give us this kind of heart for His Word!