

Better Way Apostolic Church- Bible Class

Subject: Ending Well: Psalms 119:33-48

Claiming Promises

Affliction the Real Battle of Life

"A Christian without affliction is only like a soldier on parade."—Felix Neff

There are divers kinds of vanity. The cap and bells of the fool, the mirth of the world, the dance, the lyre, and the cup of the dissolute, all these men know to be vanities; they wear upon their forefront their proper name and title. Far more treacherous are those equally vain things, the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches. A man may follow vanity as truly in the counting-house as in the theatre. If he be spending his life in amassing wealth, he passes his days in a vain show. Unless we follow Christ, and make our God the great object of life, we only differ in appearance from the most frivolous. It is clear that there is much need of the first prayer of our text. "Quicken Thou me in Thy way." The Psalmist confesses that he is dull, heavy, lumpy, all but dead. Perhaps, you feel the same. We are so sluggish that the best motives cannot quicken us, apart from the Lord Himself. What! will not hell quicken me? Shall I think of sinners perishing, and yet not be awakened? Will not heaven quicken me? Can I think of the reward that awaiteth the righteous, and yet be cold? Will not death quicken me? Can I think of dying, and standing before my God, and yet be slothful in my Master's service? Will not Christ's love constrain me? Can I think of His dear wounds, can I sit at the foot of His cross, and not be stirred with fervency and zeal? It seems so! No mere consideration can quicken us to zeal, but God Himself must do it, hence the cry, "Quicken *Thou* me." The Psalmist breathes out his whole soul in vehement pleadings: his body and his soul unite in prayer. "Turn away mine eyes," says the body: "Quicken Thou me," cries the soul. This is a fit prayer for every day. O Lord, hear it in my case this night.

Ending Well

Paul (2 Timothy 4:6-8) and Jesus (John 17:4) both ended well, to the glory of God, but not every believer achieves that coveted goal. A good beginning ought to lead to a good ending, but that is not always the case. Lot, Samson, King Saul, Ahithophel, and Demas all made good beginnings, but their lives ended in tragedy. The psalmist wanted to end well (v. 33), but ending well is the consequence of living well. What are the essentials for a consistent life that ends well?

Learning (vv. 33-34). We must pray for spiritual enlightenment so we may learn God's Word and the way of His Word. It is not enough to read the Bible, outline the books, get answers to

questions, and be able to discuss theology. We must come to understand the character of God and the workings of His providence (27:11; 86:11; 103:7). Just as children come to understand the character of their parents and what pleases them, so we must get to know God better and discern His desires. We have a complete revelation of the Lord and His will in the Scriptures, but we need inner illumination to discover what it means to our own lives. Our prayer "Teach me" must be balanced with "Give me understanding," and both must lead to obedience.

Obeying (v. 35). What we learn with our mind and apprehend with our heart must motivate the will to do what God commands. But our obedience cannot be that of a slave obeying a master in order to avoid discipline. **It must be the obedience of a grateful child who delights to please his or her parents.** "Doing the will of God from the heart" (Ephesians 6:6). This was the way Jesus obeyed His Father: "I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart" (Psalms 40:8). "I always do those things that please Him" (John 8:29). If we want to know God's truth, we must be willing to obey God's will (John 7:17).

Delighting (vv. 36-37). These verses warn us that our hearts and minds ("eyes") must be focused on the truth of God and not material wealth and the vanities of the world (vv. 51,157). **Outlook determines outcome.** Abraham looked for the heavenly city and ended well; Lot looked at Sodom and ended badly (Genesis 13; Hebrews 11:8-16). What the heart loves and desires, the eyes will see (101:2-6; Numbers 15:37-41; Jeremiah 22:17). **To have one eye on the world and the other on the Word is to be double-minded, and God does not bless double-minded people (James 1:5-8).**

Fearing (vv. 38-39). The fear of the Lord is the fear that conquers every fear. The fear of man is the fear that leads to bondage and defeat (Proverbs 29:25). The psalmist was not afraid of his enemies; **he was afraid of disgracing the Lord and bringing dishonor to His great name.** The psalmist claimed the promises of God and trusted God to deal with his enemies; **for we live on promises, not explanations.** Our faith is tested by the promises of God and our faithfulness is tested by the precepts of God, and both are important. (For more on God's promises, see vv. 41,50,58,76,82,116,123,140,148,154,162, and 170.) It is not our promises to Him (v. 57) but His promises to us that really count.

Longing (v. 40). **To have a deep longing for God's truth is the mark of a maturing believer.** His soul was "consumed with longing" and he even "fainted with longing" (vv. 20-21, NIV), so much so that he even "panted" for God's commands (v. 131). He longed for the day when God's salvation would be revealed (v. 174; Romans 8:18-23). Meanwhile, his longing was satisfied by the living Word of God, which is the believer's honey (v. 103), bread (Matthew 4:4), milk, and solid food (1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:12-14; 1 Peter 2:1-3).

Value (vv. 41-48) — Walking and Talking

We hear several voices in this section, and it begins with

God speaking to us (v. 41). He does this, of course, as we read His Word and meditate on it. He speaks in love and in mercy, and even the warnings come from His compassionate heart. The Word of God is the expression of the love of God to us (33:11) and it should result in love from our hearts to the Lord, to His people, and to the lost. God's Word shares God's promises, and promises always imply future hope. Scripture is "the word of his promise" (1 Kings 8:56), and all His promises have their realization in Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 1:20). The Scriptures are also "the word of this salvation" (Acts 13:26), for the Word declares that Jesus is the only Savior and we can trust in Him. What a wonder that God has spoken to us! (Hebrews 1:1-2). Are we listening?

But while God is speaking, the enemy is also speaking (v. 42). We have learned that the writer of this psalm was oppressed by enemies who lied about him, slandered his name, and even threatened his life. **Our main weapon against these attacks is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17), for only God's truth can silence the devil's lies** (Matthew 4:1-11). We need God's truth in our hearts, not only to keep us from sin, but also to equip us to answer those who oppose us or ask us why we believe as we do (1 Peter 3:15).

God's people speak to the Lord (v. 43). Like Nehemiah, we can send up "telegraph prayers" to the Lord right in the midst of our work and our battles (Nehemiah 2:5; 4:4; 5:19; 6:9,14; 13:14,22,31). When we are confronted by the enemy, the Lord will not give us words we have never pondered from the Scriptures, but His Spirit can remind us of what we have read and learned (John 14:25-26). The writer connected God's Word with his mouth, because the word "meditate" in the Hebrew means "to mutter." The ancient Jews spoke the Word audibly as they meditated and prayed (Joshua 1:8).

Our lives speak for the Lord (vv. 44-45) if our "walk" agrees with our "talk." The best defense of the faith is a transformed life that is compassionate toward others. Our obedience to the Lord and our loving ministry to others (Matthew 5:13-16) demonstrates the reality of our faith far better than anything else. Because we know and obey "the word of truth" (v. 43), we are able to enjoy freedom from the bondage of sin (v. 45), for it is the truth that makes us free (John 8:32; James 1:25; 2:12).

Finally, God's people speak to others (vv. 46-48). If we truly love God and His Word, we will not be ashamed to share the Word even with important people like kings (vv. 6,80; Romans 1:16; Philippians 1:20; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:15; 1 Peter 4:16). When we delight in the Word, love it, and obey it, sharing the message with others comes naturally. **To witness means to tell others what we have seen and heard concerning Jesus Christ (Acts 4:20) and what He has done for us.** A satisfied Christian is an awesome witness whose testimony God can use to convict and convert others. We do not worship the Bible but we do honor God's Word and lift our hands to the Lord in praise and thanksgiving for His gift. In many churches, the entire congregation stands when the Scriptures are brought in and publicly read. (See 28:2; 63:4; 134:2 and 141:2.)

The basic Christian virtues (1 Corinthians 13:13) are seen in those who live by God's Word: faith (v. 42), hope (v. 43), and love (vv. 41, 47, and 48). Love is mentioned three times because "the greatest of these is love." (On loving God and His Word, see vv. 97,113,119,127,140,159,163,165,167; 1 Timothy 1:5.)