

Psalm 119:134

We are 'rounding the bend' in our very long time of study in Psalm 119. As we continue, it is good to remember the overall theme of this Psalm. It is the value of the Word - God's Holy Scriptures, the Truth that has been revealed, the hope spoken of for His children, the promises foretold and the judgment to come. King David presents his personal thoughts and meditations of God and we are allowed to witness a small window into the heart of a man fully devoted to His Lord yet not without human struggles. He shares his deep concern for man's finicky heart, for suffering that is brought upon man either of his own accord or the onslaught of others' wickedness. David always, always goes back to the only answer that is plausible, true, and constant. **God.** God's Word is the subject of most importance. The Psalmist makes continuous requests of God's protection promised to His children. He also repeatedly asks for God's strength and the need for supernatural understanding of God's ways. There is a pattern of problems recognized and praises offered. **The solutions and reason for praise are always God's Word:** His precepts, His testimonies, His ways, His judgments, His commandments, and His law to name a few. As we continue, I pray that God would show us how we might be changed or challenged, blessed or encouraged by His word daily - preferably moment by moment!

Ps 119:134 Redeem me from the oppression of man, that I may keep Thy precepts.

Back up to the previous verse for a moment. Ps 119:133 reads, "Establish my footsteps in Thy word, and do not let any iniquity have dominion over me."

The request of David was to set his path in righteousness without any hindrance causing him to look away. In verse 134, man's oppression, perhaps our greatest deterrence from walking in truth is addressed. **What is the oppression of man?**

<'osheq> injury, fraud, distress, unjust gain by cruelty, extortion, oppression, deceit.

As I read this definition, my reaction was yes, unfortunately, I recognize all these things. We can all relate to the oppression of man. We have all been victim to man's oppressive ways and, because we are sinful, we have personally taken part in them. For the Psalmist, certainly all was part of his experience. Either from others rallying against him, or his own desire to follow deceit in his heart. It's difficult to do what is right when pressure

is all around us and in us to do the opposite or what seems more pleasurable at the moment. Sin in the world beckons us. It looks good, it is enticing.

When we think of oppression, it's easier to consider the oppressive acts against us and others, than to look inside and see the weakness in our own selves to perpetrate sin. So, let's approach the more difficult subject first.

Consider. *In what ways can WE cause injury towards another?* This may not be physical injury, but more likely, emotional injury. *Have you been responsible for the distress of someone?* To bring distress upon an individual can be looked upon as causing them hurt. *What comes to mind when you think of the word fraud?* The first thing I thought of was the direct attempt to deceive in order to gain, like in a big corporation. You often hear of companies being found fraudulent with their spending or taxes. Yet, as I looked up the definition, it seems I was thinking on only a larger level. *We can be fraudulent by intentionally deceiving another person, by making deceitful pretenses in order to gain an advantage.* Like lying about the truth of ourselves. Think - this may go along with desiring others to think better of you (this sin is called pride). Perhaps, you exaggerate about your responsibilities at your workplace. **Extortion and oppression** are strong words but in a small way we can discourage one another simply by not being an encouragement. And unfortunately, we've probably all been involved in **deceit**. Telling lies, making things up, embellishing the real truth. Leaving something out of the whole truth.

I hate lying! I know hate is a firm word but I really mean it! Why? Because I grew up thinking that there were things called 'white' lies. And that they were okay, hence the term 'white'. This is purposefully lying about something to another, but as long as it doesn't hurt them it was considered okay. **Seriously?** Where does that bit of thinking come from?

I was a slave to sin! I don't say that lightly. It's scary. But it is one hundred percent true. The following scripture from Ephesians describes it perfectly.

Eph 2:1 *And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,*

Well, as a result of this wrong philosophy of small lies being acceptable, I learned to tell 'stories' all the time. To make things sound better. And bigger. Or more exciting. Or not as important. Or not as bad. I lived in my own fantasy world that was woven from story after story. I became so good at this that often I couldn't even keep my own story straight. You see, I would forget the details I had given. I seriously didn't even realize what I was doing, it became so automatic to embellish everything, even

when there was no reason to do so. Even when it didn't hurt or help the truth. I simply was caught in lying for the sake of lying. Oy veh! The oppression of man. There is a good end to this story. **God.** He saved me from sin. We need to be redeemed/delivered from the oppression of man!

Ro 6:6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin;

Immediately my heart became in tuned to the trouble just a small amount of lying could cause, and it was absolutely wrong! Almost overnight I was made aware of, and caused to address, this deadly habit. Lying is not acceptable to God. And praise His name, it is now not acceptable in my life, not even a little, I abhor not telling the truth. There is only one thing that cause me more anger and distress than a lie, and that is someone speaking against the God that I love.

Ro 3:20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

Pr 6:16-19 There are six things which the LORD hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers.

The Good News:

Eph 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace,

*Back to our verse. **Do we need to be concerned about the oppression of man?** Absolutely! Lord, redeem us! Deliver us from sin!*

Ecc 7:20 Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.

redeem or deliver (KJV) <padah> to sever, i.e. ransom; to release (by any means)

God can and will deliver us from man's sinful ways. Look at the meaning of the word redeem: sever. To set or keep apart, break up, lop off!

Consider. *The act of pruning. **Have you seen a lopper? What does it do?** Quickly, cleanly and thoroughly removes a branch from its source. Done! No longer a part of the original. That's what God does with the power of sin in His children's lives. Praise His name! Sin is a slippery road we do*

not want to travel, either on the causative end or the receiving end. **In Christ, sin has no control.**

1Jo 3:5 And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.

*Joh 1:29 The next day he *saw Jesus coming to him, and *said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*

Look again at Ps 119:134.

Ps 119:134 Redeem me from the oppression of man, that I may keep Thy precepts.

Instead of living in the oppression of man, having sins power and presence dominating our lives, distracting and weighing us down, we can be freed to live *in* Truth. It's not just our own lives that are affected by sin. Our sin can cause a distraction away from truth towards others. We can be a discouragement. We can be the source of causing another to gravitate away from righteousness. **David knew through God there was deliverance from sin. The result? A life spent keeping the commands of God.** It's like we can have one or the other but not both. You've heard the saying 'oil and water' don't mix. Try it, pour oil and water together in a jar and shake it, good luck!! Neither do sin and truth mix. **Either we live amidst sin and its consequences, or we live to keep God's commands.**

Think of the often used phrase, 'sitting on the fence'. We can't live with our feet firmly planted in two different worlds. Eventually, one pull will be stronger than the other. We will be enticed to get off the fence and choose a direction. **Sin's pull is strong if we are left to ourselves.**

Keeping God's commands means to guard them. This word <shamar> has come up several times throughout the study of Psalm 119. I love the picture painted by its definition: "to hedge about as with thorns, to guard, to protect, to attend to, to observe, to preserve..."

Here's a visual: have you ever pruned a rose bush? Unless you have long gloves, you will end up with puncture wounds all over your arms and hands as you try to get deep inside the thorny stems. I was actually just pruning a pomegranate tree. Wow, have you seen the size of the thorns on one of those?! They are long, thin and sharp, I know from experience. Interestingly, the plants we have with numerous thorns are the least likely to have problems with the visitation of bugs, birds and critters. Why? Because they are protected. **Is there a strong hedge of protection around the truths of God in your heart? Or is it fairly easy for someone or some idea to unsettle your loyalty towards God?**

*“David prays that he might live a quiet and peaceable life, and might not be harassed and discomposed by those that studied to be vexatious:”
Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*

Ro 6:18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

Pr 16:6 By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the LORD one keeps away from evil.

1Jo 3:9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

1Pe 2:24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

Ps 119:11 Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee.

Heb 12:1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

Ps 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.

CONSIDER. We have David’s example of praying that God would lift the weight of man’s oppression *in order that he might be able to fully concentrate on obeying God’s truths.* Beautiful! *What’s your prayer in regards to Ps 119:134?*