

The Hebrew letter 'Resh' in verse 153 begins the Twentieth Division in Psalm 119.

Ps 119:153 Look upon my affliction and rescue me, for I do not forget Thy law.

In our own prayer to God, these words might read, 'I'm struggling Lord, help me, I want to please You'. **How often have you thought or spoken a similar prayer?** You can picture David, spent and discouraged as he is experiencing trouble or danger all around. The word for affliction can mean depression or misery. This is a state where our Psalmist is what you might consider to be 'down and out'. Perhaps he is feeling inadequate to fix things on his own. Certainly his heart is full of misery. Even though David is feeling weak and afflicted from relentless persecution, notice his direction and focus. He cries to God for help and purposes to remain mindful of God's laws.

We read similar words in Lamentations. The Jewish nation has lost everything because of their disobedience to God. Although their misery is a result of discipline, it is still very real, consequence of their sin has had a lasting effect. Their nation and their people have been destroyed and now they find themselves in exile in Babylon. Yet, the writer continues to plea for God's help.

La 5:1 Remember, O LORD, what has befallen us; Look, and see our reproach!

What is our example, where do we go for help? Are we resigned to stay at God's feet even when affliction is lengthy? Do we seek help elsewhere? David is tired yet knows where his strength is found, He continues to cry for God's help.

Realize, David is not demanding help but crying to God to consider his circumstance. He expects God to strengthen him and carry him through his difficulties, and in the meantime, David will continue to follow Him.

We can conclude from this verse and from the entire Psalm that David has a personal relationship with God. The Psalmist is not depending upon a stranger to help him. He is so intimately entwined in his relationship to God that he knows God sees his distress and cares. We do not have accounted for us that David took some time to think about where he might go for help. He didn't look through the yellow pages or scroll down his contact list to consider whom he might call.

God is there, He is always at hand to help and support in time of need. He already knows our situation and He understands circumstances better than we do!

CONSIDER. It is amazing that the God of the universe, the God of all creation, knows His children's names, their comings in and goings out, and personally and intimately is involved in every aspect of their lives.

The words of a well-known hymn comes to mind. *Great is Thy Faithfulness*. Think for a moment upon some of the words in this song. 'Morning by morning new mercies I see, all I have needed Thy hand has provided ... Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not, As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be ... Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide. Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside'.

Read **Lamentations 3:21-25**. "This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. ²² The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. ²³ [They]

are new every morning; Great is Thy faithfulness. ²⁴ "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him." ²⁵ The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him."

We have abundant security in the truths of God's word! Our example from Psalm 119:153 is to pray for relief in distress.

Jas 5:13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praises.

God cares. He is not detached from His children. His attitude towards those He loves is not careless. His love is purposeful; God has a direct personal interest in you!

We pray for deliverance from troubles, then we wait and trust. This is definitely the hard part! Waiting on God for His answers, and accepting that God's way of helping us may not be what we expect. And His answers may not be as immediate as we would like. He will always deliver us in a way that brings glory to Himself.

Ps 107:6 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble; He delivered them out of their distresses.

Ps 50:15 And call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me."

Matthew Henry's Commentary likens David's words to this, "Quicken me [rescue me]. Lord, I am weak, and unable to bear my troubles' my spirit is apt to droop and sink. O that thou wouldst revive and comfort me, till the deliverance is wrought!"

We pray to God – we trust He hears us – we wait for answers – we continue in obedience – we are assured of His perfect plan!

This is our example and the 'recipe' we are to follow.

We like immediate help and answers! Have you been tempted to look elsewhere for solutions because it doesn't seem that God is working? Unfortunately, we see this reaction to trouble often. Forgetting God or not waiting upon Him can lead us to seeking our own methods of solving a problem. Our answers may even be contrary to God's. The second part of Psalm 119:153 is our obedience in action! We know God is resolved to help us – we read this truth in His word over and over again. **What does our resolve to follow Him look like?**

Looking back in Psalm 119, we have many examples of David's resolve.

Ps 119:16 I shall delight in Thy statutes; I shall not forget Thy word.

Ps 119:109 My life is continually in my hand, Yet I do not forget Thy law.

Ps 119:141 I am small and despised, [Yet] I do not forget Thy precepts.

We can absolutely trust that God's compassion and understanding will see our need. We can absolutely trust in His power to deliver us in His perfect timing. We can absolutely trust that our obedience in waiting upon Him and following Him, will glorify His name.

In the next verse of Psalm 119, the Psalmist continues to seek God's deliverance and requests God's defense.

Ps 119:154 Plead my cause and redeem me; revive me according to Thy word.

Have you ever felt like you were standing alone – for the right reason – wondering how it is that others are not understanding your position?

God stands up for His children. He will fight our battles. I have been reintroduced to super heroes through my little grandsons. No matter the epic battle being fought, the 'good' guys always end up saving the day. Certainly, God is much more than a fantasized super hero, but the scenario is implied. He has redeemed us for His glory and nothing will thwart His purpose.

"The original word translated "deliver" [revive], is taken from the office of a redeemer, or next of kin among the Israelites, to whom it belonged to redeem the inheritance, or ransom the person of his impoverished or enslaved relative; and also to be his patron and defender against injustice and oppression, and the avenger of his blood if he were slain."
Thomas Scott

We have an advocate, God is on our side! The Treasury of David includes this quote on verse 154, "Strive my strife, and redeem me' – that is, stand in my stead, bear my burden, fight my fight, pay my price, and bring me out to liberty. When we feel ourselves dumb before the foe, here is a prayer made to our hand. What a comfort that if we sin we have an advocate, and if we do not sin the same pleader is engaged on our side."

We, God's children are in a win-win situation! The only way we can lose is if we deny God altogether – and then we need to question that perhaps we were never saved and had never truly embraced God as Lord and Savior.

CONSIDER. We have all sat in the grandstand of some sporting event. If the game you are watching is close in score, the anticipation builds as each point is scored. The crowd becomes part of the competition as cheers and groans fill the stadium with each movement of their team towards victory. Sometimes the celebration is sweet, and sometimes there is a loss to accept. There is no guarantee of victory, only hope.

If you are on God's team, you are guaranteed victory because He has already won the battle against sin and death. Period. No last minute surprises, no questioning the umpire on his call, and no sorrow of defeat. Calling to God for His rescue gives glory to Him because it recognizes our need for Him and our dependence on His plan. When we ask for His help, we are assured of His intervention. This is beautiful!

The word 'revive' has shown itself earlier in **Psalm 119:149, Hear my voice according to Thy lovingkindness; revive me, O LORD, according to Thine ordinances.**

CONSIDER. Three words found in Psalm 119:154, Plead – Redeem – Revive. We need God's grace! He will defend and deliver His children in all circumstances. God gives us life, He quickens us, He keeps us going, He strengthens us, and He restores us so that we might honor Him.

We cannot miss the phrase, 'according to Thy word' in verse 154. **Why is this important? Does our rescue always look as we might choose? Is our deliverance always in agreement with our time schedule?**

God does want to bless us, He desires to pour His love on us, to smother us with His grace, and to increase our faith in His promises. **Do we ask? Is God the one we seek**

when things get tough? Or, do we point fingers upward in anger and distrust His love because we do not understand His answers?

When we ask God for His mercies according to His word, we acknowledge His ways are best. We are saying we want what He wants. There is nothing so big that God cannot attend in His power. He is the only one who is able to supply exactly what is needed for the moment. He is the only one who understands a situation so perfectly that His solution is absolute.

"What the believer hath need of, that God hath not only a will to supply, but also an office to attend it, and power to effectuate it, as here he hath the office of an Advocate and of a powerful Redeemer also, wherein the believer may confidently give him daily employment, as he needeth: "Plead my cause, and deliver me: quicken me according to thy word." --David Dickson, *TOD*

We see similar requests written by David earlier in the book of Psalms.

Ps 35:1 Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me; Fight against those who fight against me.

Ps 43:1 Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.

Samuel also lifted his voice to God for deliverance.

1Sa 24:15 "The LORD therefore be judge and decide between you and me; and may He see and plead my cause, and deliver me from your hand."

Read Job's words as he is suffering and falsely accused.

Job 5:8 "But as for me, I would seek God, and I would place my cause before God;

God knows all, He is for us, He will strengthen us, and He will rescue us according to His righteousness. An old hymn comes to mind ... *'What a friend we have in Jesus'*. Praise His Name!