

Psalm 119
week 3, v. 51-52

Ps 119:51 The arrogant utterly deride me, [Yet] I do not turn aside from Thy law.

arrogant <zed> presumptuous, proud

To be presumptuous means to assume something; it is arrogant behavior that has no right. Having arrogance is to have or show feelings of unwarranted importance out of overbearing pride; it is self-importance.

David is dealing with those who have proclaimed self-importance and are proud. Their actions are described as intense mockery towards him. The words 'utterly deride' are strong words with intense action. This is more than an unkind word or look. This is verbal: loud and constant. In Psalm 119:157, David speaks of his many persecutors and enemies.

That he had been jeered for his religion. Though he was a man of honour, a man of great prudence, and had done eminent services to his country, yet, because he was a devout conscientious man, the proud had him greatly in derision; they ridiculed him, bantered him, and did all they could to expose him to contempt; they laughed at him for his praying, and called it cant [insincere], for his seriousness, and called it mopishness [wasting time], for his strictness, and called it needless preciseness. They were the proud that sat in the scorner's seat and valued themselves on so doing. Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible

It is difficult for us to imagine this kind of attack against us. Think of those times when perhaps you were made fun of or even misjudged or disliked because of what you believe. How do we typically want to respond? Imagine knowing that a majority of people are against you and set out to make you miserable. How does the Psalmist respond; what is the example to us? Do you shrink away from speaking truth because you are fearful of the reproach of others?

He refused to be laughed out of his religion. Man's jeers are scarcely felt when the Lord Jesus smiles upon us. If we decline from holiness because bad men laugh, we shall make good men weep. Spurgeon Devotional Commentary

Conceited sinners make footballs of godly men. They call it roaring fun to caricature a faithful member of "The Holy Club"; his methods of careful living are the material for their jokes about "the Methodist"; and his hatred of sin sets their tongues wagging at long faced Puritanism, and straitlaced hypocrisy. If David was greatly derided, we may not expect to escape the scorn of the

ungodly. There are hosts of proud men still upon the face of the earth, and if they find a believer in affliction they will be mean enough and cruel enough to make jests at his expense. Treasury of David

' [Yet] I do not turn aside from Thy law. '

turn aside <natah> (KJV declined) to bend away (including moral deflection);

Even in circumstances that seem incredibly weighed against him, the Psalmist does not vary in following God' s commands. It' s interesting to note here that ' moral deflection' is included. How many times have we done what is right yet our thoughts are not so pure?

David' s example is to follow God with all his heart, mind and soul regardless of how he is treated or perceived. This means his feelings are right before God, his thinking is right before God and his intentions are right before God. Is it possible to follow this example?

Job 23:11-12 "My foot has held fast to His path; I have kept His way and not turned aside. 12 "I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.

Isa 38:2-3 Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, and prayed to the LORD, 3 and said, "Remember now, O LORD, I beseech Thee, how I have walked before Thee in truth and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in Thy sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

Heb 12:1-3 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, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.

When we pay attention to the teasing or mockery of others because of our faith – what we believe, how we act, the words we use – then we are giving credence to them instead of honor to God.

Are you faithful in the face of ridicule? Are you steadfast when you find yourself standing apart? Do you bend to the berating of others?

As we continue on to verse 52, we find ourselves guided back to the question we discussed when we were looking at Psalm 119:50. Where do you find comfort? Again we are reminded that lasting comfort comes from God' s word.

Ps 119:52 I have remembered Thine ordinances from of old, O LORD, and comfort myself.

Ps 77:11 I shall remember the deeds of the LORD; surely I will remember Thy wonders of old.

Ps 143:5 I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Thy doings; I muse on the work of Thy hands.

Ps 105:5 Remember His wonders which He has done, His marvels, and the judgments uttered by His mouth,

Ex 14:29-30 But the sons of Israel walked on dry land through the midst of the sea, and the waters [were like] a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. 30 Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.

2 Pe 2:4-9a

What does it take to remember something? The implication is that there was knowledge beforehand. We cannot bring to memory something that was never heard or learned. Information that I never had in my brain will not appear no matter how hard I try to recall. If I never knew how to solve a calculus equation, I won't be able to remember how to solve one now. **How do we apply this concept to remembering the faithfulness of God in the past?** (Our testimonies need to be shared! ; all good things in our life and the lives of others need to be attributed to God for His glory)

David remembered God's promises and it brought him comfort when he was challenged for his faith. **Can we proclaim the same comfort?**

judgments of old--that is, His past interpositions in behalf of His people are a pledge that He will again interpose to deliver them; and they become the theme of constant and delightful meditation. The more we keep the more we love the law of God. Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary

Our true comfort must be found in what our God works on behalf of truth and right, and as the histories of the olden times are full of divine interpositions it is well to be thoroughly acquainted with them. Moreover, if we are advanced in years we have the providence of our early days to review, and these should by no means be forgotten or left out of our thoughts. The argument is good and solid: he who has shown himself strong on behalf of his believing people is the immutable God, and therefore we may expect deliverance at his hands. Treasury of David

When we experience affliction it is encouraging to remember God's faithfulness to His children in the past. We can also be encouraged by the testimony of God

's faithfulness to us in personal difficult times: how He has brought us through; how He has used evil for good; how He has turned calamity into spiritual growth.

God's word should bring us comfort and encouragement. How do you comfort others? If you have children – either in the home or grown – have they been taught to go to God for comfort? Are they reminded of His constant care for them? How about your family members and friends? When trouble arises where do you lead them for comfort?

Application Questions

In verse 51, who is giving David a difficult time? In this verse the arrogant are mocking David because of what he believes. Perhaps this verse can be a reminder to us to be careful of how we treat others who believe different/act different/look different etc. What do you think?

How does the Psalmist respond to mockery? How can you follow this example in your own life? Are their situations or relationships where you are hesitant to speak of what you believe? What is more important: to please God or man?

How do the following examples encourage you to remain steadfast in your words and actions even under criticism?

Job 23:11-12

Hebrews 12:1-3

Read Psalm 119:52. What gives David comfort?

Are you comforted by God's promises?

Do you comfort others by taking them to the Truth?

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for His faithfulness in the past and His promises for the future. If you are in need of encouragement, you may want to think back to the time period when you were saved and make a list of all the

blessings God has poured on your life: the care He has shown and the protection He has provided.

How would God have you apply Psalm 119:51-52 to your current situations?