

Summer Psalms
MORE THAN LONGING

Wednesday, July 16
Reading: Psalms 119:33-48

Psalm 119:43 *Never take Your word of truth from my mouth, for I have put my hope in Your laws. 44 I will always obey Your law, for ever and ever. 45 I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out Your precepts.*

In 1877, Mary Lathbury wrote a hymn about God's Word that has become treasured by many even today.

Break Thou the Bread of Life / Dear Lord, to me,
As Thou didst break the loaves / Beside the sea;
Beyond the sacred page / I seek Thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for Thee / O Living Word.

Her words remind us that a passion to know God's Word is not enough. Studying God's Word must lead to a relationship with the Living Word. The *He* (119:33-40) and *Waw* (119:41-48) sections of Psalm 119 make it clear that we need God's guidance to understand His Word and apply it to our daily lives.

The plea of the psalmist is for God to teach him so he can understand and obey with all his heart (119:33-34). The New Testament shows that the Holy Spirit who lives in believers gives us wisdom and understanding to know God better (Eph. 1:17; Col. 1:9-11; Jn. 14:26; 16:13). He is our Teacher!

A second plea is for God to direct his life in the way of righteousness (119:35-40). One reason we often follow after selfish ambitions and worthless desires is because we are not immersing ourselves in God's Word. Our human nature draws us away from God's path to our own selfish one. This destructive path leads to disgrace. It is no coincidence that "preserve my life" is twice pleaded in these verses (v. 37, 40). God uses His Word to keep us on the right path and keep us from evil.

A third plea is to "never take Your word of truth from my mouth" (118:41-43; 46). His longing for God's Word has led him to a personal relationship with God. This causes him to want to share His love with others. He shares it with those who taunt him (v. 42) and even before kings and rulers (v. 46). He is not ashamed to declare his love for God's Word because he knows it is true and the world's only hope. The apostle Peter tells us "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have (1 Peter 3:15).

A final thought before we leave these verses. Many times people think of the Bible as a list of "do's and don'ts." They view it as a list of commands to obey and actions to avoid. But Psalm 119:44-45 gives us a better perspective. While the writer dedicates himself to obeying God's law forever, he tells us that this allows him to "walk in freedom." Far from restricting or limiting us, obeying God's Word frees us to be what God designed us to be. It frees us from sin and guilt and allows us to fulfill God's plan for our lives. The more we study God's Word the closer we draw to its' Author and are better able to see the wonderful plan God has for us.

Bible study is not about getting a bunch of facts in your head. It is about allowing God to take possession of your heart. His unfailing love and salvation will open up the Scriptures so you can live in freedom and joy.