

Summer Psalms
BOUNCING BACK FROM THE BOTTOM

Saturday, July 19
Reading: Psalm 119:81-96

Psalm 119:81 *My soul faints with longing for your salvation, but I have put my hope in Your word.* **82** *My eyes fail, looking for Your promise; I say, "When will You comfort me?"*

General George S. Patton defined success by how high you bounce when you hit bottom.¹ We all hit rock bottom at some point during our lives. Sometimes we hit bottom because of foolish choices we make and sometimes it's because of the foolish choices of others. How do we bounce back when we hit the bottom?

The author of Psalm 119 has hit rock bottom. He has already mentioned his enemies many times, but now their persecution has overwhelmed him. "My soul faints..." (119:81). "My eyes fail..." (119:82). "They almost wiped me from the earth..." (119:87). All these words translate the same Hebrew word *kālāh*. This word is most often used in a negative way to mean exhaust, end, or destroy. That is how the author views his situation. He has hit rock bottom. His cry is "When..." and "How long..." He feels useless like a wineskin ruined by smoke (119:82-84).

At these low points in life, prayer and Bible study are often the first things to go. We are so immersed in our own troubles that our relationship with God takes a backseat. But the opposite should be true! When we hit rock bottom is when we need to fall on God's mercies in a greater way. This is what we see in Psalm 119. Though he is in deep distress, he continues to cry out to God in prayer. He also does not abandon God's Word. Notice how after each cry of pain, he bases his response on what God has said.

"I am a wineskin in the smoke...I do not forget Your decrees"
"Help me...all Your commands are trustworthy"
"They have almost wiped me from the earth...but I have not forsaken Your precepts"
"Preserve me...that I may obey the statutes of Your mouth"

The next section (119:89-96) proclaims that it was his love of God's Word that got him through the rough times (119:92-93). Through the Scriptures he has learned that God is always faithful (119:89-91). He is also reassured that he belongs to the Lord (119:94).

The final verses of this section remind us that men's plans cannot defeat the purposes of God. While the wicked may be lying in wait to destroy him, the author knows that their ways are limited. Nothing man does can reach the perfection of God's Word. The author will trust in the boundless wisdom and commands of God (119:95-96).

The great thing is that when we hit rock bottom we find that God is the Rock on which we can get a solid footing. Are you in a difficult time of life? Don't forsake prayer and hold on to the promises of God's Word. They will build and sustain your relationship with God - and that relationship is the only thing that can help you "bounce back from the bottom."

¹ https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/george_s_patton_161896