

**Psalm 119: 25-32; “The Lord Enlarging My Heart”, A Communion Sermon
delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on October 6th, 2024,
in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

The question that I want bring before us this afternoon is this: What should a disciple of Jesus Christ do, in order to promote the progress of God’s work in their heart? Well, there are 4 requests that David makes here, which I want to draw from, which will show us how to make progress in being a faithful disciple, in connection with the work of God in your heart that He alone can do. Let’s look at them, and think about them together, before we partake of the Lord’s Supper.

1st – In order to promote the progress of the work of God’s grace in your heart you must pray to be revived according to God’s Word.

David, as a true Old Testament disciple of Jesus Christ, had come to know that he simply must have greater power from God at work in his soul in order to make progress in holiness, and bear fruit to God’s glory, in the things that he did; in the way that he lived. He says in verse 25 – “My soul clings to the dust”. Evidently he had fallen very low in his mind and heart, in relation to all that he knew that he should be, in holiness, in the sight of God. He was not experiencing that sweet fellowship and communion with God that he had known in days past.

He knew that God’s testimonies were his delight, and that they were his counselors, as it says in verse 24 of the last section. But he looked at the state of his own heart, and he believed that he was failing to live up to all the grace and mercy that he had been shown. And so he says – “My soul clings to the dust”. Let me ask if this is you, my friend? Perhaps you have come here today knowing that you need to be revived. You know that you need the life and the power of Christ to work in your heart, and yet you do not sense it. You do not see yourself bearing fruit to God.

What should you do? You should pray and confess your need. You should pray that God’s word would come to you with power when it is preached. You should pray that God will meet with you when you have your private devotions, and that He would teach you by His Spirit. Tell the Lord that you can never be encouraged in your soul with anything less. I hope that you will understand that even the greatest of the Lord’s disciples need to learn to “always pray and not to faint”. (Luke 18: 1) I think that you may remember this verse. But you must admit that you do grow faint sometimes, don’t you? You do have times in your life where your soul clings to the dust.

I think of that godly man David Brainerd. He often quoted Psalm 73, verse 28, in his journals. “But it is good for me to draw near to God...” He wrote in his journal on July 3rd, 1744; “Was still very weak.” “This morning was enabled to pray under a feeling sense of my need of help from God, and I trust I had some faith in exercise; and, blessed be God, I was enabled to plead with Him a considerable time.” “Truly God is good to me.” “But my soul mourned, and was grieved at my sinfulness and barrenness, and I longed to be more engaged for God.” “Near nine, I withdrew again for prayer, and through divine goodness had the blessed spirit of prayer; my soul loved the duty, and longed for God in it.”

“O it is sweet to be the Lord’s, to be sensibly devoted to Him!” “What a blessed portion is God!” “How glorious, how lovely in Himself!” “O my soul longed to improve time wholly for God!” Do you see what Brainerd was doing there? He was praying to be revived according to God’s Word. His communion with God and His service to God needed to be revived daily. And so must ours if we would be faithful. Let me ask you now, what kind of a prayer life do you have? What kind of fellowship and communion with God do you have over His blessed Word?

If you say, “Not much”, or “None at all”, then there really is a great problem with you, whether you will acknowledge it or not. A person who wants to become mature in Christ, knows when their soul is clinging to the dust, and it bothers them very much. But do you know that it is at that very time, that you should pray this prayer of our text – “Revive me according to Your Word?”

There is precious grace to be found by looking to the crucified Savior in faith, and in pleading the promises of God back to Him with a believing heart. The Lord Jesus says in John 10: 10 – “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” You see, you need to pray and ask for life; that is, an abundance of the grace of Christ, so that you might be lifted up to bring glory to God by the way that you live.

I like what Charles Bridges says in his commentary on Psalm 119, at this verse. He says, “Quickening grace is not the ground or warrant for *our* duty.” “Indisposition to duty is not our weakness, but our sin.” “It is not therefore to be indulged, but to be resisted.” “We must mourn over the dullness that hinders us, and diligently wait for the “help we every moment need.” “God keeps the grace in His own hands, and He gives it at His pleasure, to exercise our daily dependence upon Him.” This is very good. We must not sit still. We must pray to be revived on a daily basis.

We must pray to especially be revived through the time we have here today in the Lord’s Supper. Will you not see and remember what it cost your Savior, to bring you life? He had to lay His life down for you, so that you could have this kind of grace.

2nd – In order to promote the progress of the work of God’s grace in your heart, you must meditate on His wonderful works. (verses 26 and 27)

He prays confessing – “I have declared my ways, and You answered me; teach me Your statutes.” “Make me understand the way of Your precepts; so shall I meditate on Your wonderful works.” It does not promote the work of God’s grace in your soul if you remain silent in prayer about what you know what you have been like in your heart. Why should God give grace to one who thinks themselves just fine for the most part, most of the time, when there are really things that need attention?

It says in James 4, verse 6, and 1st Peter 5: 5, that God is opposed to the proud. He resists the proud and the self-sufficient, but He gives grace to the humble. He looks to the one who is contrite; the one who is humble and crushed in spirit. The various situations of what is taking place in your heart, can, and often times they do, change greatly from moment to moment as you go through the day. And the responses and reactions of your heart to people around you, they will require real grace and help from God if you are going to glorify God and truly help other people. David here declared his ways before God, and God answered him.

Job was the same way in Job 38: 10 – “You know the way that I take, and when You have tested me, I shall come forth as gold.” But passing the tests which are related to obedience, and fighting the spiritual battles that you face, against your fleshly desires, is going to require your letting God’s word abide in You, and you believing that word to you. Job states that he had, “treasured the words of God’s mouth more than his necessary food.” And yet, a further experiential teaching was necessary, even for this righteous man.

He was at certain points justifying himself and not God. This is sometimes the way that it is with every true disciple of Christ. We learn certain truths from God’s Word, and then we begin to apply them to our lives, and then God will test us to see whether we have really learned them. God is the One who brings these tests. We forget this sometimes, and we think that the real problem is people in our lives who don’t understand us, or we don’t understand them. But in the end God knows where the real problem lies, and what we really need. In the end that righteous man Job confessed in Chapter 40, verse 3 – “Behold I am vile”.

After he confessed this, then God instructed him further. This is what you and I must learn to do as well. We must not assume that we know all about everything, in relation to God’s ways and His statutes. It is one thing to know the 10 commandments. It is another thing to trace the progress of your spirituality in relation to keeping them. You must continue to pray as David did – “Teach me your statutes”. Teach me what it means, O Lord to have no other gods before You. Teach me what it means to take Your Name upon my lips, and not to take it in vain. Teach me, O Lord, to remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy. Teach me O Lord how to love my neighbor as myself. What does it mean to acknowledge your ways, or to declare your ways, before God? It

most definitely means that you acknowledge before God in prayer, the things that you have sinned and erred in, in regard to not keeping His precious commandments.

These failings and sins may have been “the way” that you thought would be easier for you to go about to obtain the things that you wanted to become or do. It may have been the way you were taught by your parents or your friends. It may have been the counsel that they gave to you; to seek only your own interests. But now you have found that that counsel was not the counsel of God, but it was only the advice of people who only had your earthly interests in mind. You may have had to painfully come to learn the truth of Isaiah 55, verse 8 and 9 – “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the Lord.” “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” And so, I hope that you understand that God will faithfully bring you to the place where you will acknowledge that profound truth.

Psalm 32, verse 5 says, “I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden.” “I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,’ and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.” Sometimes this will take a diligent search of your own heart, as you find it mentioned in Psalm 77, verse 6. “I call to remembrance my song in the night; I meditate within my heart, and my spirit makes diligent search.” In other words, beloved, you ponder things seriously, and especially when you come to the Lord’s table.

You think deeply upon your ways, and you search diligently in your spirit for what God the Holy Spirit might show you; perhaps some sinful thoughts, and sinful tendencies in your heart? It is good to ask ourselves these questions: Where have I been proud? Where have I been unloving? Where have I promoted my own glory instead of Christ’s? Where have I been sensual? Where have I borne false witness, and slandered someone, or reviled a brother? Where have I been insensitive? Where have I caused pain to be brought to another, because I would not consider what they needed?

What a great comfort it is, to know that God knows all about us. When you acknowledge your sin, it will be good for you to acknowledge it as something that He has seen all along, and to declare that to Him. Perhaps it is a great burden, or a great grief, or a great affliction that is the thing that has brought you low. When you confess this as a part of your ways, then you will also be able to cast it upon the Lord. Psalm 55, verse 22 says, “Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.” These things, you see, need to be acknowledged and dealt with in the presence of the Almighty.

Psalm 90 says – “He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” Our text in verse 26 says – “I have declared my ways and You answered me”. This is the answer to your being in the dust. It is to take refuge in God. Psalm 91, verses 14 and 15 say, “Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high because he has known My name.” “He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.”

You say to me – Well I have not set my love upon God in the way that I should have. Perhaps not, but this verse refers in the first place to Jesus Christ. He set His love upon God in a perfect way. And so, if you will trust in Him, then the promise shall apply to you as well. Remember the Lord Jesus has gone before you. It is His love and His faithfulness that makes you perfect, and complete in the sight of the holy God. Confess your sins and failures, and remember to look to the Lord in faith for the forgiveness of them all.

Then, 3rd – In order to promote the progress of the work of God’s grace in your heart, you must pray to be strengthened according to God’s Word. (verse 28)

“My soul melts from heaviness; strengthen me according to Your Word.” It literally reads, “My soul drops from grief, strengthen me according to Your Word.” I think that it is all too true that when you really begin to see how great the problem of your indwelling, remaining corruption is in your heart, that you often will become weighed down in your spirit. This is why if you would

make progress as a learner, you must pray to be strengthened. You must have the strength of Christ's grace to overcome your flesh. You must have strength to rise up and do battle with your sins. You must have strength come to your soul so that you will do God's will.

How does this come about? It comes through the Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah 45: 22-24 says, "Look unto Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth!" "For I am God, and there is no other." "I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath." "He shall say, 'Surely in the Lord I have righteousness and strength.'" "To Him men shall come."

Sometimes, when you are downcast, you might ask – To whom can I come? The answer is, to your Lord Jesus Christ. If you remember this, and you come to the Lord Jesus by faith, you will find that you will be able to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, that you have found Him. His righteousness has become your righteousness by faith. His strength has become your strength because of His Holy Spirit imparting it to you. The Apostle Paul went through many tribulations so that all of God's saints would know of this blessed truth.

He says in Ephesians 3: 14-21 – "Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations which are for your glory." "For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height – to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, to all generations, forever and ever, Amen." It is this love, it is this power, it is this strength of grace that we praise Him for at this time. I would ask you all to come down now to the front, so that we may eat this Supper together.

David's 4th and last request is his believing prayer that God would enlarge his heart.
(verses 29-32)

"Remove from me the way of lying, and grant me Your law graciously." "I have chosen the way of truth; Your judgments I have laid before me." "I cling to Your testimonies; O Lord, do not put me to shame!" "I will run the course of Your commandments, for You shall enlarge my heart." This Supper is a token not only of the forgiveness of our sins, which would have been great enough by itself. But it is also a token of that promised enlargement of our hearts so that we might run in the way of His commandments. Christ's love for us His people is being spoken of here, as that which enlarges the believer's heart. He is the author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross and despised the shame.

And He is now sitting at the right hand of the throne of God. So, in meditating upon Christ, at this time, He would have you to lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily besets us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, and let us run the race of life, by asking Him for grace to run in the way of God's commandments. In the process, we will learn to love each other, even as He loved us. We will grow in our ability to give of ourselves, in service to our King, as we remember Christ; the One who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Let us remember these words from 1st Thessalonians 3: 12 & 13 as we partake of the Supper – "And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints."