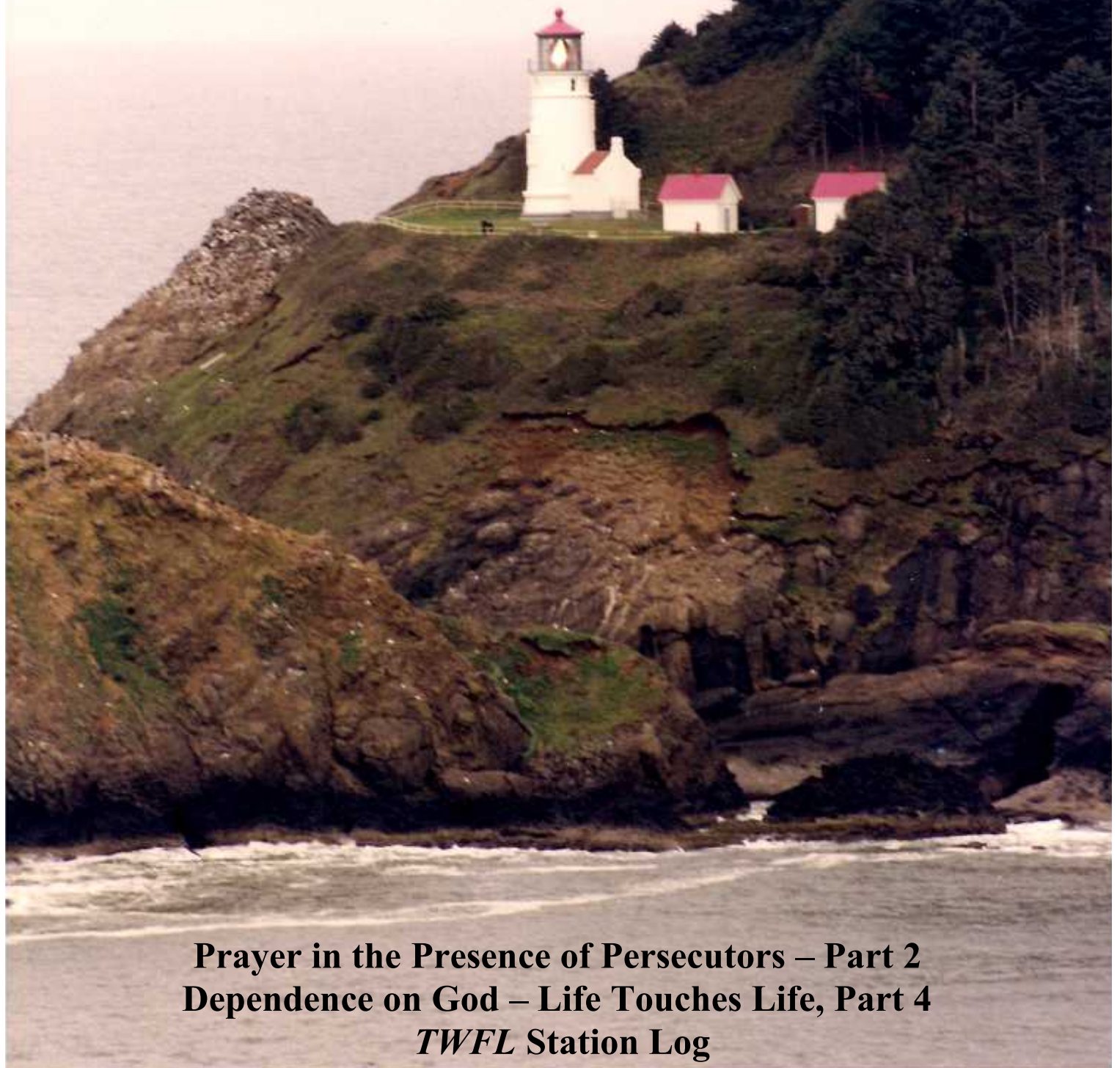


# TRUTH TALK

A PUBLICATION OF THE WORD FOR LIFE

Helping you live a God-centered, truth-driven life

March, 2011



**Prayer in the Presence of Persecutors – Part 2**  
**Dependence on God – Life Touches Life, Part 4**  
*TWFL Station Log*

# Truth Talk

Psalm 119 – The Word for Life!

## ***Prayer in the Presence of Persecutors (Part 2)***

Stanza 20 – Verses 153-160

- <sup>153</sup> *Consider my affliction and deliver me, for I do not forget Your law.*
- <sup>154</sup> *Plead my cause and redeem me; revive me according to Your word.*
- <sup>155</sup> *Salvation is far from the wicked, for they do not seek Your statutes.*
- <sup>156</sup> *Great are Your tender mercies, O LORD; revive me  
according to Your judgments.*
- <sup>157</sup> *Many are my persecutors and my enemies, yet I do not  
turn from Your testimonies.*
- <sup>158</sup> *I see the treacherous, and am disgusted, because they do not  
keep Your word.*
- <sup>159</sup> *Consider how I love Your precepts; revive me, O LORD,  
according to Your loving-kindness.*
- <sup>160</sup> *The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of  
Your righteous judgments endures forever.*

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*Cover Photo: Heceta Head Lighthouse on the Oregon Coast  
Richard Melzer, Photographer*

# TRUTH TALK

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## *Prayer in the Presence of Persecutors* *Psalm 119: 153-160, Stanza 20*

In this stanza the psalmist continues his prayer for deliverance that began in the last stanza. However, the danger that was still distant in the last stanza has arrived in this one. Though clearly distraught, the psalmist draws near to the Lord in prayer and rests confidently on the perfections, promises, and protection afforded him by God through His Word. The faith that was formed in the Word-driven prayer of the previous stanza does not flounder or falter in the face of present danger that has become a reality in this stanza.

The realities confronting our pilgrim as he walks in the presence of his enemies drive him to God in an appeal for life (vv. 154, 156, 159). The character of God and the perfection of His Word give strength and boldness to his appeal for God's help. By the end of the stanza, the psalmist has settled his soul by these truths so that he walks securely in the midst of trouble.

By the time our pilgrim arrives at this stanza, he is surrounded by a multitude of great and powerful enemies (v. 157). However, he stands securely and safely on the path because he is also surrounded by God's many and marvelous mercies (v. 156). These mercies become the ground for a series of eight direct and intense appeals to God, five of which occur in the first two verses of the stanza (vv. 153-154). At the heart of these appeals is a repeated request that God "look" (vv. 153, 159) in order that the psalmist might live (v. 156, 159).

The flow of the stanza is expressed by a literary device commonly used in the biblical poetry of the Old Testament known as a chiasm. A chiasm looks like the letter x (its name is actually taken from the letter x). Each statement at the front end of the stanza is matched with a similar statement on the back end of the stanza. The statement at the mid-point of the "x" usually stands

at the center of the stanza and is generally the central or main idea in the stanza. In this case, the chi-

asm is one of similar ideas rather than identical statements. If we wrote it out it would look like this:

- a. LORD, look and give me life (vv. 153-154)
  - b. The wicked care nothing for your Word (v. 155)
    - c. Yet your compassions are many (v. 156)
      - d. So give me life! (v. 156)*
        - c. Still, there are many foes (v. 159)
          - b. They (the faithless) care nothing for your Word (v. 158)
            - a. LORD, look and give me life (vv. 159-160)

What does one pray for in the presence of his persecutors? Life! This is what our pilgrim prayed in the day of his affliction. This is also what the Lord prayed on the eve of His temptation. God answered His Own Son's prayer with death in order that He might grant life to all His adopted sons in the day of their suffering. His death means life for all who follow the way of the Word. Because of this gracious fact we, like our pilgrim friend, can come with specific requests, knowing that He Who did not hold back His Own dear Son will not hold back any good and necessary thing from His dear children.

## **I. His Passionate Requests (vv. 153-155)**

Without question, the psalmist finds himself in desperate circumstances again. And though this is not the first time he has found himself in such a dire place, his plea to the Lord is marked both by an intensity and a confidence that goes beyond what he has expressed anywhere in the previous stanzas.

What he experienced on the path is not uncommon to all believers who make serious effort to walk the way of the Word. Rather than growing easier, the pathway grows more

difficult. The challenges are harder and the stakes are higher the longer one walks before the Lord. To be sure, the resources are also more readily available to pilgrims who have taken time to deepen their knowledge of God's Word. Those who have relied on God's Word in past difficulty find it easier to do so again when facing new troubles. The presence of such confidence is the fountain from which spring his intense, passionate pleas for divine assistance.

These pleas comprise a good bit of the content of his prayer. They are expressed in the form of eight vocative statements. A vocative is a grammatical way of issuing a strong appeal in the form of a demand to a second party; in this case God. Based on his knowledge of God and his deep commitment to the relationship he enjoys with God, the psalmist speaks boldly and passionately and asks God to do certain things on his behalf. Those requests are stated in the strongest possible language available to the psalmist. To be sure, they are couched as requests. But those requests are more than just casual in nature. They come as strong, direct appeals for God to do

something. In other words, the psalmist comes appropriately, but he also comes passionately and persistently to God, and he does not intend to stop until God grants his requests.

Nine times in this stanza our pilgrim comes before the Lord with particular requests. He beseeches the Lord to look into His circumstances and act accordingly (vv. 153, 159). He desires the Lord to rescue him (v. 153). He appeals that God would take up and plead his case (v. 154) and redeem him (v. 154). Three times he begs the Lord to grant him renewed strength and life (vv. 154, 156, 159). And for the first time, he prays imprecatorily that God would withhold salvation from his enemies (v. 155).

### *Consider me! (vv. 153, 159)*

Clearly the psalmist continues to experience the inner turmoil of his traumatic circumstances, and in desperation, he cries out for Divine intervention. The term "consider" in the text comes from a Hebrew verb that means "to see." Sometimes it is translated "behold." In this paragraph, it is translated "consider" or "take note."

To be clear, the psalmist is not assuming that God is unaware of his circumstances. In other words, he is not trying to inform God as though God did not know. Nor is he trying to call his circumstances to God's attention as though God were distracted or inattentive. Rather, he is appealing for God to note his circumstances in order that He might intervene and act accordingly. This term is not passive in its appeal. The psalmist is asking God to "see to" the situation that has so afflicted His servant. And he has ample biblical precedent for such a bold request. This is precisely how God responded to others of His servants who acted in faith and found themselves in dire need of Divine intervention precisely because of their obedience. This was the case with Abraham whose faithful obedience led him to stand at an altar with a knife raised above his beloved Isaac. God saw Abraham's faith and "saw to" his circumstances by providing a ram

*God saw Abraham's faith and "saw to" his circumstances by providing a ram caught in a nearby thicket. God looked upon Abraham and Isaac and provided what was so desperately needed for deliverance and life.*

caught in a nearby thicket. God looked upon Abraham and Isaac and provided what was so desperately needed for deliverance and life. Also in 1 Samuel 16 where Samuel, sorrowing over the rejection of Saul as king, was told by God to go to the house of Jesse where God had "seen" His new

king. Upon asking how this awkward and dangerous task might best be fulfilled, God told Samuel that He would "see to it."

The psalmist looks back on a history rich with stories of God's provision, and he comes boldly requesting the same for himself. He, like

these ancient men of faith before him, is in the circumstances which confront him because of his commitment to live by faith and walk the way of the Word. His faithful obedience led him directly into the trouble he now faces. His ongoing obedience becomes the grounds upon which his passionate pleas are established before God.

### ***Rescue me! (v. 153)***

The divine intervention for which the psalmist pleads takes the form of deliverance from his plight. The term he employs means “to draw out or extricate from trouble.” As grounds for his plea, the psalmist points to his continual life pattern of not forgetting God’s law. He couches his testimony in the perfect tense in order to indicate his deep and abiding life commitment to acting in conformity to God’s moral demand. The familiar term “remember” shows up again and reminds us that the psalmist is doing much more than mentally recalling God’s law. He is actively, intentionally, and consistently conforming his life and shaping his behavior so as to measure up to God’s expectation for daily living.

### ***Defend my cause! (v. 154)***

The third imperative moves the imagery into the courtroom. The psalmist appeals to God to take up his matter and “fight” for him. The term can signify a physical fight in which a champion fights for the cause of another. It can also refer to a legal scenario in which an individual becomes the judicial advo-

cate for another party (or at times against). In this case, the psalmist points to his life testimony, and on that basis, appeals for God to take up his case and become a personal Advocate devoted to vindicating His client, in this case, the psalmist.

### ***Redeem me! (v. 154)***

In this case, the Advocate is more than just a “legal heavyweight” hired to come to the aid of a client to whom he has no other obligation than the one created by the agreement to take the case. In the case of the psalmist, his Advocate is also his near-kinsman. This relationship underlies the imagery of the fourth imperative.

The term “redeem” would have immediately reminded the original readers of a particular imagery created by the one doing the “redeeming.” Redemption is more than vindication – it is release from a particular set of difficult circumstances. This release would come at the hand of a “redeemer.” The term used in this stanza indicates a close, familial relationship between the one being redeemed and the one doing the redeeming. The redeemer is a near kinsman, similar

to the relationship Boaz had to Ruth when he redeemed her through the “ceremony of the sandal” in Ruth 4:1-12.

In the case of the psalmist, he considers the personal nature of his relationship to Yahweh and appeals for God to act in light of that relationship. In other words, because he and God were intimately bound to each other in a covenant relationship, God was his kinsman-redeemer and therefore obligated to act on his behalf.

Nor is the psalmist the only one who enjoys this relationship. All pilgrims who walk in the way of the Word and who devote themselves to loving His Word and doing His law enjoy this tremendous privilege and can make this same appeal.

***Revive me! (vv. 154, 156, 159)***

His passionate pleas all lead to a climactic request for renewed life! All of God’s people from time to time grow weary in the journey. They all at times are worn out by the relentless and ruthless pursuit of their spiritual enemy, Satan. In

this case, the psalmist’s own personal experiences mirror those of all who follow in his steps. And he articulates the appeal all of us desire to shout out to God when we just can’t seem to muster up strength to take another step on the path.

“Revive” is a bold, desperate cry for new strength and renewed life when all strength is gone. It is not the first time the psalmist has made this appeal, and in this stanza, he will repeat it three times! In the context of difficulty and even death, it is natural for God’s children to cry out for life to the God Who enlivened them from sin and set them on the path to start with. They cry out for the God Who gave them life at the beginning of the journey to revive them by giving them more life for the duration of the journey!

And the appeal gains confident expression when the psalmist considers what God has promised in His Word. Revive me according to Your promise (v. 154). Revive me according to Your laws (v. 156). Revive me according to Your love (v. 159). Measure out more life and strength to me and measure it

by the reliability of Your promises, the immutability of Your moral mandates, and the immeasurable depth of Your loyal, gracious love.

***Do not save the wicked!***  
***(v. 155)***

Note the potential imprecatory nature of this imperative. It could be that the psalmist is making the observation that deliverance from his enemies seems to be a distant possibility. Or, it could be that he is observing that his enemies do not enjoy salvation from the Lord because of their wicked character and disobedient ways.

However, the grammar of the verse affords a third possibility. It could be that the psalmist is praying an imprecatory prayer against God's enemies – "Let salvation be far from the wicked!" If this is the case, he is asking God to act according to His Word and to bring judgment on those who persist in disregarding God and disobeying His commands.

*God's compassion is more than "pity" on His servants. It speaks of the active involvement of God to sustain them and eventually deliver them from their plight.*

This should not necessarily be read as the psalmist asking God to condemn his enemies eternally. Let us not forget the reminder we have from Christ to pray for our enemies. However, when God's enemies are acting against God, frequently the Psalms contain examples of prayers prayed by God's

people who witnessed this sort of devoted wickedness and determined affront against God. In such cases, they prayed for God to bring about the just reward for such

evil of which He repeatedly warned in His Word. Because such enemies openly reject God's Word, then it is just and fitting that they experience the judgment that God repeatedly warned against.

In other words, these enemies are not ignorantly disobeying God's Word or acting against God's moral expectations. They are doing so with full knowledge of God's Word as well as His warnings of what such evil-doers can expect. When men who know God refuse to submit to Him and openly defy God's

laws, sobering though it may be, it is fitting to ask God to bring about the judgment He promised in His Word to bring on such men.

## **II. His Personal Responses (vv. 156-158)**

How should God's servants respond when they find themselves in similar circumstances to those of our psalmist in this stanza? Obviously prayer is an instinctive response, and the psalmist's prayer in this stanza (and the previous one) helps to shape the way we ought to pray when we find ourselves on this section of the journey.

However, pilgrims also experience emotional responses that rise almost unbidden from their hearts. What are those responses and, more importantly, what can we do to shape them properly before the Lord? In other words, how do we respond to our natural reactions when faced with tremendous difficulty or prolonged trial?

### ***Many are my persecutors (vv. 157-158)***

The psalmist's reaction is common to most of us when faced with

overwhelming trial or severe persecution – “it is too much!” “Lord, many are my enemies and they are stronger than me!”

These men are described as having wicked character (v. 155) because they refuse to obey God's Word. They are disloyal and faithless because they have acted treacherously against the covenant God has made with them (v. 158). They have apostatized from God's covenant. And they are “foes” (v. 157) because they ruthlessly and relentlessly persecute those who strive to live righteously.

How does a righteous man feel toward foes of this nature? He loathes them (v. 158). This goes beyond merely loathing their sinful ways. He expresses his loathing of such men. The term “loathe” expresses a violent disgust or deep revulsion. These men who are violently committed to violating God's Word and whose hearts are marked by a deep-seated revulsion of God's character are revolting to the psalmist, not because of what he is experiencing at their hand, but rather on account of what they are doing and expressing against God!

*Many are your mercies*  
(v. 156)

The psalmist's natural reaction when facing overwhelming enemies is countered by a self-reminder of the many mercies of God that are his. Though there be many enemies, there are more mercies! God's compassion and mercy overflows to the psalmist and far outweighs the burden of his tormentors.

God's compassion is more than "pity" on His servants. It speaks of the active involvement of God to sustain them and eventually deliver them from their plight! God is rich in this quality. His compassion is very great and springs from His perfect fidelity to the promises He has made in His Word.

Against the faithlessness of his oppressors (v. 158) stands a faithful God (v. 156) Who has promised to act on behalf of His faithful servants who remain true to His Word (v. 157b).

**III. His Persuasive Reasons (vv. 153, 157, 158, 159)**

Though he is desperate, the psalmist comes confidently before God with bold requests. His boldness rises from and rests on four reasons he presents to God when making his case. These reasons are all introduced by the word "for," which alerts the reader that these statements serve as grounds upon which the psalmist appeals. God should act "because" of these reasons.

Furthermore, the reasons he presents are all permanent, consistent parts of his character. Each reason takes the form of something the psalmist has consistently practiced or expressed throughout the course of his pilgrimage. They are all expressed as perfect tense verbs, indicating they have been his persistent, consistent practice.

*I have been obedient to Your Law* (v. 153)

His appeal for deliverance from suffering rests on his "remembering" God's law. As we have noted throughout this psalm, the term "remember" denotes more than mere mental memory of something. To forget God's law involves actively disregarding and disobeying something of which you are fully

aware. Forgetting God's law regarding idolatry or immorality does not mean that one forgets what God has said about such matters. Rather, forgetting implies that one has intentionally disregarded what he knows God has said in these areas.

The psalmist appeals confidently to God for aid because he has not disregarded anything that he is aware God has said. He has consistently tried to obey and regard all that he knows regarding God's expectations.

***I have been faithful to Your Word (v. 157)***

The second reason for his confidence rests on his persistent fidelity to God's Word. Unlike his persecutors who have turned away and apostatized from that Word, the psalmist has remained loyal and true. He has kept his foot on the path and refused to swerve or turn aside as others around him have done.

***I have been loyal to Your Person (v. 158)***

What kept him on the path and guarded his foot from turning aside

was his faithful loyalty to the relationship he enjoyed with God. This loyalty is expressed by his siding with God, not with God's enemies.

Loyalty to God is always expressed in two ways: 1) obedience to God's Word, and 2) repudiation of God's enemies. Relational loyalty is a two way street. The psalmist can appeal for God to act in loyal-love toward him because he has been loyal to God in his own earthly relationships.

This principle is stated by James in the New Testament in the most graphic of terms when we are told that friendship with the world is enmity with God (James 4:4). In fact, those who claim to be God's children, but who choose friendship and alliance with the world, are called adulterers! The psalmist has not made such alliances. Rather, he has been loyal to God, and this loyalty becomes a powerful reason for his bold appeal to God in time of trouble.

***I have loved Your Will and Way (v. 159)***

Earlier in the stanza the psalmist beseeched God to take note of his

circumstances (v. 153). Now he asks God to note his character. He has loved and honored God's precepts. The term "precept" is one of the eight words used in the psalm to refer to different aspects of God's Word. This term has particular reference to God's declarations regarding His will and way – what He desires men to do and what He wants them to be.

Rather than rejecting God's revealed desire in these areas, the psalmist has enthusiastically embraced what God has said and has attempted to do and be accordingly. Furthermore, he invites God to note his commitment in this area.

Imagine the profound implications of this request. Knowing full well what God has stated regarding what a man is to do and be and inviting God to examine one's life in these areas can only be done when a man has given careful and consistent attention to conforming his life and shaping his character to meet God's stated expectations. This sort of life provides deep confidence to one who has lived in this way and opens the way for confident, bold praying to God. On the other hand, the knowledge that one has not

measured up or that one has not even made a consistent attempt to live accordingly becomes a great hindrance to prayer in times of desperate need.

#### **IV. His Profound Reliance (159-160)**

The previous section might lead one to wrongly conclude that the psalmist rested on his own efforts and commitments in making his appeal to God. That would be a profound mistake. Though the psalmist pointed to his faithful life, it was not the final ground for his confidence.

What gave the psalmist peace in the storm was his confidence in God and not in his own merits or actions, however faithful they might have been. Rather than resting on his own character, he rests on the perfections, promises, and protection of God.

In other words, his prayer is directed to God, and it rests on God and not himself. His prayer is intensely God-focused rather than man-centered.

***He rested on God's character  
and not his own***

The psalmist expresses his deep confidence in God's Word by using the term "according." The term refers to the measure of something or to what it contains or describes. Often it has reference to the capacity or capability of something or someone. In this stanza, the psalmist rests his confidence according to three very specific things that are true about God.

Our pilgrim is confident in God's deliverance because such deliverance is in accordance to God's promise – what God has said (v. 154). Furthermore, his confidence is in accordance to God's just laws (v. 156). In other words, because God has obligated Himself in many places in His Word, those who keep those laws can rightly expect the Giver of those laws to act accordingly and bring deliverance. Finally, his confidence in divine deliverance is in accordance to God's loving character as revealed in His Word (v. 159).

God's people can anticipate God's protection and personal intervention on their behalf because God

has made such promises to them, because God has obligated Himself to act in this way, and because it is God's loving nature to do so. ***He rested on the perfection of God's Word rather than his performance.***

Trust in God is based on God's character, and all that can be known about God's character is contained to the revelation He gave in His Word. Therefore, though ultimately our confidence rests in God, immediately that confidence is sourced in God's Word.

The psalmist reflects this truth in the final verse in this stanza by pointing us to two abiding realities that sum up the essence of God's Word.

First, the psalmist reflects on the ***truth of God's Word*** as a source of confidence in God. As a unified whole, all that God has said in His Word is completely true. The sum total of God's Word is utterly true and totally dependable. It is reliable in every aspect. God's Word is authoritative because it comes from God. It is also completely accurate because it is God's speech. And in giving this revelation in

propositional form, God has made His truth accessible and available to men. In short, the sum of God's Word is truth, and those who apply its teaching will be so shaped by that truth that their lives will meet God's expectations.

Second, the psalmist reflects on the *permanence of God's Word* as a source of his confidence in God. It is not merely the sum total of God's Word that the psalmist considers to be true. Each of its individual parts or components are also marked by this quality. Each of God's judgments are righteous. And they are timelessly relevant (eternal). Peter noted that God's Word contains specific promises that provide believers with all they need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3-4). In each of its various and individual parts, God's Word is timeless and imperishable. What it stands for in its totality is authoritative and dependable. What it states in its specific parts is permanent

and timelessly relevant to all pilgrims who walk the way of the Word, regardless of what century or in what culture they make their pilgrimage. The Word remains a timeless, faithful, and reliable guide for the journey.

### **Conclusion:**

The psalmist's profound, personal reliance on God and His Word produced both an internal (emotional) stability as well as a mental (objective) stability that rose out of a life devoted to consistently and constantly practicing the truths of which He has been convinced and to which He has entrusted His path.

For needy pilgrims caught in the maelstroms of life, God's Word exudes a never-failing reliability, enabling God's servants to endure and persevere in the midst of the trials and tribulations facing them from a hostile world.



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# DEPENDENCE ON GOD

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## *Life Touching Life - Part 4*

*Join Pastor Sam Horn (SH) and Dr. Les Ollila (LO) for a discussion that originally aired on THE WORD FOR LIFE.*

SH: Welcome to another broadcast of the Word For Life radio program. With me in the studio this morning is my co-host, Dr. Les Ollila from Northland International University, where he serves as Chancellor. Doc, we've been talking for the last number of shows about the topic of mentoring, which is the biblical concept of discipleship. You've been taking us through a very interesting story out of the Old Testament found in II Kings 4, with Elisha and the Shunammite woman.

We're discussing the drama that surrounds this event where her son, who had come as a gift from the Lord, had passed away. From that story we're drawing the principle of life touching life. Let's review and catch up with our story, as we will finish this series today.

LO: As we review, we saw the child was dead. Gehazi, Elisha's servant, was sent to put Elisha's stick on the face of the child to bring him to life, and there was no response. Elisha then came to the scene. This is who the Shunammite woman was really looking for.

SH: She connected with Elisha.

LO: She connected with Elisha and had confidence in him. She perceived that he was a holy man of God. What a testimony that is. How would we be remembered by others?

But then we saw that after Gehazi returned, Elisha went to the dead child, and it was Elisha that had God's power in his life. He went into the room with the child, and we noted there was proximity – he went right to where the problem

was. There was privacy. He shut the door, and there we find the one-on-one time. There are things that we cannot do in a group. It may take a very short time with one-on-one attention to let someone know you care, not just generally, but that you care about that person specifically.

SH: In fact, you had given us a list of things from a source that you had found, a book you had quoted. I wonder if you could mention that source again for the listeners who weren't with us the last time.

LO: Dr. Ross Campbell wrote a book quite a few years ago on how to really love your child. When I read that book, I saw how it would fit under this idea of privacy we are discussing here. Dr. Campbell said the four keys to show you really love your child are eye contact, focused attention, physical contact, and discipline. But it starts with the eye contact and focused attention, which fit perfectly in this scenario.

SH: Intimacy and privacy.

LO: Shut the door. Those of you who are parents know how special it is to have time alone with your children. It's a tremendous memory for them.

Now we get into the third part. In II Kings 4:33 it says, "and he went in and shut the door upon them, and prayed unto the Lord". Obviously prayer is crucial here. There is the prayer that is a transference of trust...that as we realize we can't, God must. We tell our students that we don't have devotions in the morning to demonstrate to God how disciplined we are, but to declare unto God how dependent we are. At this point in praying Elisha, in spite of the fact that he was a Spirit-filled man of God, acknowledged that he was helpless apart from prayer.

SH: He had done all these other miracles.

LO: Yes, but he realized that it was God's empowerment.

SH: That's a very important point.

LO: Yes. He realized very quickly that if anything would be done, it would be done through God honoring Himself through answered prayer. I don't know of anything that is more effective when you're in a state of panic than transferring that load to God in prayer.

SH: Help me to understand, Doc, because often, as a pastor, a parent will come about something very precious – a child, a family member, or something they desperately want God to do. As a pastor, I want to tell them to pray about it, but what they sometimes think they are hearing is that this is the way to get God to do what they want Him to do. But Elisha didn't have that attitude in prayer. There was a surrender to God, a declaration of dependence, saying, Lord, if anything is going to happen here, it's going to happen because of You.

LO: Yes. What drives us to prayer? Normally it is what we cannot handle. Otherwise, it's generally bedtime prayer, meal-time prayer, but when we get into situations that we cannot handle,

it goes from praying to crying out, lifting up our voice to God. If you look in Luke 9, you will see the disciples had a spirit that was indifferent - “send the multitude away. We are tired and we are hungry” – because they were heading to a desert place to rest awhile.

SH: They wanted to get out of the mess.

LO: They had an uncompassionate spirit. Then later they showed an insensitive spirit. After a few days, God showed Himself on the Mount of Transfiguration. Christ was transfigured in all of His Glory, and then Peter spoke up and said, “Let's build three tabernacles...” you know what Peter typically would come up with. He had to speak up first, and the voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son. Hear Him.”

Then we find an impotent spirit in the disciples, because when they came down from the Mount of Transfiguration, from the very presence of the Lord, they came back to reality. Then what did

they meet? They met a child possessed.

SH: And they couldn't do anything about it.

LO: They were impotent – the father of the child came to the Lord and said to Him, “We brought my son to your disciples to cast him out and they could not.” What did Jesus say? “Oh, faithless and perverse generation...this kind comes forth only by prayer and fasting.” And so, they had an impotent spirit because of faithlessness and prayerlessness.

What we see in Luke 9 is a parent desperate about the condition of his child. And what did Jesus say? This kind – there are certain kinds of things parents are facing out there – there are the kind that drive us to prayer, and it may not be just a five minute thing, it may be all night, laid out before God, praying saying, “God I will pray and I will fast to seek You bring a correction in this situation.”

SH: In the case of Elisha, you can assume that the widow and her husband were praying. But Elisha

was also praying. The person who came in to help them had to be as intense in prayer, if not more, than the people who were going through the problem.

LO: You don't ever see presumption on the people who know God. You don't ever see pride. When Joseph was approached in prison about the king's dreams, he gave God the glory regarding the interpretation of the dreams, and he prayed. What did Daniel do in the midst of his problems? Daniel prayed.

SH: What's interesting about prayer is that we can do it anywhere, any time. It's the one thing we can always do.

LO: Make sure all of your children are on your prayer list, and teachers, make sure you have the students in your class list on a prayer list.

But in II Kings 4, there was a focused prayer burden for a child who was in a desperate condition.

Then thirdly, we see the price that was paid. In verse 34, we see that

Elijah went up and laid upon the child, put his mouth upon his mouth, eyes upon his eyes, and hands upon his hands. He stretched himself upon the child, and the flesh of the child waxed warm. So we see what he did here was that he completely laid himself out. Obviously Elisha was a prophet. We wouldn't dare do that kind of thing in a counseling session without making sure we could be in an attorney's office in a hurry. But the point of the matter is that he literally gave himself to the child.

Now we wonder why was Gehazi so ineffective? Let's look at II Kings 5, where Naaman came for healing.

SH: A great Assyrian general.

LO: Many commentators believe this happened during Elisha's time of prayer, and he just sent word out to tell Naaman to go dip in the Jordan River seven times. You remember Naaman became very upset, because he had come with a great wagon loaded with riches and gifts. Gahazi looked at the riches and...

SH: ...and his mouth watered.

LO: He heard Elisha refuse the gifts. Then what did Gahazi do?

SH: He went after that wagon.

LO: Gahazi went after the wagon and misrepresented the heart of his master. He told Naaman that his master changed his mind and wanted the gifts.

SH: In other words, he just lied.

LO: But we discover something about Gahazi – why he was a defective servant and why the Shunammite woman didn't trust him. He was self-serving, not others-serving. He was in it for himself, for what he could gain. He was obedient to do what Elisha told him to do, but his real heart was revealed.

Now go back to what made Elisha so effective. You remember in I Kings 19, when Elisha surrendered to God, and Elijah said, "Then follow me." But Elisha said, "I have to go home now and bid my family well and take care of matters." Elijah responded,

“Well, what have I to do with you?” Basically he said that was not what he was looking for. And what did Elisha do? He killed a yoke of oxen, he burned the plow shares, and totally left his old way of life. He abandoned completely to the will of God. I do believe that’s a missing factor today. We cannot just pretend or play, we have to come to the point of abandonment.

SH: When our kids are at stake, or when something like what we’re talking about here is at stake, there’s always a price, isn’t there?

LO: Yes, there’s a price tag involved. It just doesn’t happen.

SH: It’s more than just praying a prayer before bed at night or a prayer while driving to work. There really is a personal price that’s involved.

LO: Yes, it requires focused prayer, and then there’s personal involvement...giving myself literally to that child. Philippians 2 is a perfect parallel passage for this particular thought. “Look not

every man on his own thing, but also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant,” and then what did He do? He took on flesh and became obedient unto death, the death of the cross. He took on that servanthood.

SH: So what if a parent, or someone, tries to do this and it doesn’t work. Do they give up? Is there another principle here?

LO: Some people feel a problem doesn’t work in their time frame. Most of us are too busy to have problems, so we only have a certain time frame in which our kids are allowed to have a problem. It doesn’t work that way. We might feel like saying to our child, “If you have a problem that’s outside of my time frame, and you are going to get it...from me! You’re not going to get my personal attention, you’re going to get something else!”

SH: Doc, I hate to break in on you, but I have to say a few words to our listeners. We know that these broadcasts are a blessing to you, and we want them to be. We pray that the Lord will take these words from His Word and make them fitting for your life. Obviously, we depend on your prayers, and we can certainly thank the

Lord for those of you who send in your support to help keep us on the air.

We hope you enjoyed today's broadcast. Thanks for listening, and please join us next time as we bring the Word of God to your life.



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