

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

The psalmist said, “You are good and do good; teach me your statutes” (Ps 119:68). Everything that comes from you, including your statutes, is good. If I will listen to your word and incline my heart to your teaching, my life will reflect your goodness. How wonderful it is to serve a good God! Praise the LORD!

Today in Your Word

Today you shared with me the first half of Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the longest book of the OT. This psalm is a “Torah Psalm,” and along with Psalms 1 and 19, its focus is on your law. It was written in acrostic form: each of the eight verses in the twenty-two stanzas begins with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet. There are a total of 176 verses and all of them are exultant in their love of your word. In almost every verse, the psalmist makes some reference to Scripture: law, testimony, precept, statute, commandment, promise, judgment, and word. The terms have different shades of meaning (e.g., your instruction, your decisions, your truth, your commands, your rules, etc.), but they all center on the same theme: your revelation in written word. As I read Psalm 119, I hear the voice of a man who is under attack by the wicked. They are bent on destroying him (v. 95), and their attacks have taken the form of derision (v. 22), slander (v. 69) and intrigue (vv. 23, 85). The psalmist is a young man (vv. 9, 99), and he is sensitive to their scorn (v. 39). His isolation makes him feel “small and despised” (v. 141), and he describes himself as drained and dried up (vv. 25, 28, 83). He vacillates between being saddened and infuriated by his experience, reacting first with tears (v. 136) and then with “hot indignation” and “disgust” (vv. 53, 158). Yet the persecution has driven him closer to you. He knows that at times he has strayed, but he accepted your discipline with gratitude, and the practice of his life is to keep your precepts (vv. 67, 71, 75). He is determined to live by your word, and his two repeated requests, “Give me understanding” and “Give me life,” show that he is eager to learn and to be renewed by your life-giving law. In all, he is a man I identify with and understand. He is also a man that I look up to and want to be like.

Reflection

Modern life is filled with sexual images and sinful attractions. How can I keep pure in the midst of such pollution? By guarding my way according to your word (Ps 119:9).

Request

Father, help me to seek you with my whole heart; don't let me wander from your commands! May your word be hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against you (Ps 119:10–11).

Thanksgiving

Thank you for the wondrous things that I behold in your law. “This is my comfort in my affliction, that your promise gives me life” (Ps 119:50).

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: “[Open My Eyes, That I May See](#)” – Clara H. Scott.

Meditation Verse: Psalm 119:71.