

The Disciplines of a Godly Life: Meditation Psalm 119

The Seven Blessings of Affliction: Number 4 AFFLICTION – Teaches us God's Faithfulness

There are blessings that God's Word says are associated with Affliction, seven of them are found in the 119th Psalm.

This morning we are looking at the 4th.

As we turn to Psalm 119.75 Do you remember the other three from last week?
Check and see if you have these marked:

AFFLICTION: is described in Psalm 119 by two words; the first *onee* (6040) seems to portray an emotional state of misery as an affliction; the second word *anah* (6031) seems to portray a physical affliction of being bowed down or squished beneath a physical load.

- 1. AFFLICTION PUSHES US INTO GOD'S WORD:** Only God's Word can really help us in afflictions – cards, visits, gifts, activities all can only offer temporary relief through distraction or amusement. Psalm 119:50 This is my comfort in my affliction (6040 emotional), for YOUR WORD (Reading Divine Word to find and follow God's Will for my life 565) has given me life. *Affliction can deaden us, so God's Word "has given life".*
- 2. AFFLICTION KEEPS US CLOSE TO GOD:** A consistent life is built by afflictions. God uses afflictions to pull us back and keep us on His path for our lives. Often we only call when we need something – so He gives us reason to call. Psalm 119:67 Before I was afflicted (6031 physical) I went astray, But now I keep YOUR WORD (Reading Divine Word to find and follow God's Will for my life 565). *Affliction can stop us from straying away from God, so "now I keep".*
- 3. AFFLICTION CHISELS GOD'S PLAN INTO OUR LIFE:** There are truths and lessons we only can learn in the furnace of trouble. And remember in the fiery furnace of Daniel 3, only the things that kept them from walking properly were burned away! So

affliction scrapes away what is not part of God's plans for our lives – people, possessions, positions, securities... Psalm 119:71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted (6031 physical), That I may learn **YOUR STATUTES (Following the Divine Plans to build Life the way God intends it to be)**. *Afflictions can remind us.*

4. **AFFLICTION REMINDS US GOD IS FAITHFUL: God's unchanging faithfulness is learned best in affliction. Afflictions remind us that everything the Lord does is good, right, and the best thing there could be for us. Psalm 119:75** I know, O Lord, that **Your judgments (Building Life upon God's Unchanging Decisions)** are right, And that in faithfulness You have afflicted (6031 physical) me. *Afflictions are very personal "me".*

So God wants to remind us that He is faithful when we are afflicted.

One of the greatest blessings of life is to know God.

Knowing God means that He also knows us.

God knowing us means He knows life hurts at times. When ever I go through hard times, sad times, dark times, discouraging times – I can testify with many of you that the greatest cure comes from looking at Jesus.

Remember how Isaiah 53.3 calls Jesus "A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief...". Sounds to me like just the One to get to know when troubles, pains, and afflictions come rolling through like an unexpected summer storm on the picnic of our life.

So where do I look when life hurts? I start in

Hebrews 4:15-16 For we do not have a High Priest *who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses*, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.
16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Did you catch that? Jesus can 'feel the pain with us of our weaknesses'. Now what would you call depression, discouragement, frustration, sadness, and so on – weaknesses. And what does Jesus do? He feels the pain with us. The word is *sum-pascho* 'with' 'pain'. In fact the pain of the cross is called the paschal time or pain time. And that is what Jesus feels for us.

Great so how does that help us? Well to bridge the chasm between the High and Mighty Sinless Jesus Christ the Lord of Glory – and you and me, God gave us the cast of this Book. This morning look with me at an Old Testament figure whose life reflects the feelings of Jesus for our weaknesses we painfully live with. His name – Jeremiah. His testimony is the 25th book of God's Word, and it is called Lamentations. Does that title suggest anything to you? It is the cry of a troubles soul. It is the testimony of a man who knew pain, weakness, and much sorrow.

As you turn to that 25th Book of God's Word, Lamentations 3 -- let me briefly sketch the life of this incredible servant of God. Jeremiah¹ must have had an incredible childhood. The Scriptures tell us God had chosen him before his birth to be a prophet. His family was notable in their service for the LORD. Life was exciting for the son of a high priest.

Jeremiah 1:1 The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, (NASB)

One of the great blessings of Jeremiah's life was that his dad was the one who found the lost book of the Law. How Jeremiah's love for the Word showed through in his life as God's prophet. He was the "son of Hilkiah" (Jer. 1:1) and as 2 Kings 22:8 records:

"And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it."

Note also Jeremiah's uncle was Shallum husband of Huldah the prophetess:

Jeremiah 32:7 Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum thine uncle shall come unto thee, saying, Buy thee my field that is in Anathoth: for the right of redemption is thine to buy it. (KJV)

Jeremiah's woes were unimaginable to our relatively peaceful lives. He lived through the death throes of the nation of Judah.

- From an earthly perspective ***Jeremiah's life was a failure***. During his lifetime he watched the decay of God's chosen people, the horrible destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of the nation to Babylon.
- He preached for 40 years and ***saw no visible result among those he served***. Instead those countrymen he warned for God sought to kill him if he wouldn't stop preaching doom (Jer. 11:19-23). He had virtually no converts to show for a lifetime of ministry.
- He had no one to find joy and comfort with as his own family and friends were involved in plots against his (12:60).
- He ***never had the joy of a godly home*** because God never allowed him to marry, and thus ***he suffered incredibly agonizing loneliness*** (16:20).
- He ***lived under a constant threat of death***, as there were plots to kill him in secret so no one would find him (18:20-23).
- He ***lived with physical pain*** while he was beaten severely and then bound in wooden stocks (20:1-2).
- He ***lived with emotional pain*** as his friends spied on him deceitfully and for revenge (20:10).
- He ***was consumed with sorrow and shame*** and even cursed the day he was born (20:14-18).
- ***His life ended with no relief*** as he was falsely accused of being a traitor to his own country (37:13-14). Jeremiah was arrested, beaten, thrown into a dungeon, and starved many days (37:15-21). If an Ethiopian Gentile had not interceded on his behalf he would have died there.

¹ Sources used are: [The Word of God](#); Baxter, [Explore the Book](#); Scroggie, [The Unfolding Drama](#); [Christ in all the Scriptures](#); [The Criswell Study Bible](#); [Walk through the Bible](#); [The Compact Guide to The Bible](#), Lehman Strauss, CHM, MacArthur, Ashamed of the Gospel, p. 76-77, Sanders, Spiritual Discipleship, P. 129-136.

- o *In the end, tradition tells us he was exiled to Egypt, where he was stoned to death by his own people.*

Perhaps the most striking feature of this book is the fact that despite the terrible woes of the life Jeremiah was called to (1:5), he saw that it was all at the Master Potter's Hand (18:1-6). At the point of near despair over his failed ministry, God asked Jeremiah to go to the Potter's house and there he would get a message from the Lord (18:2). Although Israel had failed so grievously, the heavenly Potter was able to bless them again if they would but repent and yield to his Perfect Touch.

So as we turn to Lamentations 3, what are the Biblical afflictions God uses, manages, allows and most of all – hurts that HE can handle:

1. **THE HURTS OF BROKEN PHYSICAL HEALTH:** Lamentations 3:4 He has aged my flesh and my skin, And broken my bones.
2. **THE HURTS OF DEEP EMOTIONAL STRAIN:** Lamentations 3:5 He has besieged me And surrounded me with bitterness and woe.
3. **THE HURTS OF PERIODS OF DARK DEPRESSION:** Lamentations 3:6 He has set me in dark places Like the dead of long ago.
4. **THE HURTS OF DESPERATION AND BURDEN OF BEING TRAPPED:** Lamentations 3:7 He has hedged me in so that I cannot get out; He has made my chain heavy.
5. **THE HURTS OF FEELING OUT OF TOUCH, DISTANT FROM GOD AND LEFT BEHIND IN LIFE:** Lamentations 3:8 Even when I cry and shout, He shuts out my prayer.
6. **THE HURTS OF FRUSTRATION AND CONFUSION:** Lamentations 3:9 He has blocked my ways with hewn stone; He has made my paths crooked.
7. **THE HURTS OF ANXIETY AND SADNESS:** Lamentations 3:17 You have moved my soul far from peace; I have forgotten prosperity.
8. **THE HURTS OF PHYSICAL WEAKNESS AND HOPELESSNESS:** Lamentations 3:18 And I said, "My strength and my hope Have perished from the Lord."
9. **THE HURTS OF BITTER AFFLICTION AND AIMLESSNESS:** Lamentations 3:19 Remember my affliction and roaming, The wormwood and the gall.

So what possible blessing could ever come from such a desperate condition of affliction and hurt? Look back at this passage because it contains the greatest message of Hope in all of God's Word. This is what our Faithful God offers:

1. **IN OUR FAILURES – HIS UNFAILING LOVE:** Lamentations 3:22 Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not.
2. **INTO OUR MONOTONOUS LIVES – HIS DAILY FRESHNESS:** Lamentations 3:23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.
3. **IN OUR WEAKNESSES – HIS PERSONAL DOSE OF STRENGTH:** Lamentations 3:24 "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!"
4. **IN OUR OFTEN FRANTIC LIFESTYLES – HIS PROMISE OF BLESSINGS:** Lamentations 3:25 The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, To the soul who seeks Him.
5. **INTO OUR ANXIOUS LIVES – HIS SALVATION GIVES QUIET HOPE:** Lamentations 3:26 It is good that one should hope and wait quietly For the salvation of the Lord.

6. **INTO OUR CONFUSING LIVES – HIS PERFECT PLANS:** Lamentations 3:33 For He does not afflict willingly, Nor grieve the children of men.

The Scriptures are filled with HOPE:

1. **HOPE UNLOCKS DIVINE STRENGTH:** Psalm 31:24 Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD. (KJV)
2. **HOPE ATTRACKS GOD'S ATTENTION:** Psalm 33:18 Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; (KJV)
3. **HOPE OPENS GOD'S EARS:** Psalm 38:15 For in thee, O LORD, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God. (KJV)
4. **HOPE IS GOD'S DESIRE FOR US:** Psalm 39:7 And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee. (KJV)
5. **HOPE DISPELLS GLOOM:** Psalm 42:5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance; 11 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God; 43:5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God. (KJV)
6. **HOPE IS GOD IS TO BE LIFELONG:** Psalm 71:5 For thou art my hope, O Lord GOD: thou art my trust from my youth; 14 But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more. (KJV)
7. **HOPE IS A CHOICE:** Psalm 78:7 That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: (KJV)
8. **HOPE IN HIS WORD:** Psalm 119:49 ZAIN. Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. (KJV) Also v. 81, 114, 116.
9. **HOPE IN YOUR CREATOR:** Psalm 146:5-6 Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God: 6 Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever: (KJV)

To get started learning about affliction let's trace it through the 119th Psalm. Go with me back to Psalm 119.50 and mark with me a complete lesson on affliction. Remember if there are seven of something in God's Word it may be a way that He engineered for us a complete look at a special topic or area. So with these verses, a complete lesson from the Lord as our Divine Teacher as he traces how He will use afflictions as a part of His Divine Plans to build our lives into a masterpiece for His glory.

Here they are in Psalm 119 – v. 50, v. 67, v. 71, v. 75, v. 92, v. 107, and v. 153.

Remember this morning that affliction in our lives is much like the fires of Daniel 3 that the three Hebrew boys were made to enter. That fiery furnace has a powerful lesson. We remember if we read carefully the account, that the fire only burned away that, which hindered them from walking with the Lord, as they were in the fiery furnace! So in our lives affliction burns away what hinders our walk!

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- 5. AFFLICTION MAKES US LOOK UP AT OUR TEACHER:** The onset of troubles marks the beginning of a personal tutorial with our Divine Teacher. Affliction is an opportunity to "delight" () in Him or for us to "perish" () in our troubles. Psalm 119:92 Unless **YOUR LAW** (Receiving Divine Instruction from the Divine Teacher that is perfect). had been my delight; I would then have perished in my affliction (6040 emotional). *Affliction "perishes" us or squishes our lives under its weight.*
- 6. AFFLICTION FORCES US TO EXPERIENCE HIS PROMISES:** Affliction usually increases, as we get older. But God's Word will always renew, refresh, and revive. Psalm 119:107 I am afflicted (6031 physical) very much; Revive me, O Lord, according to **YOUR WORD** (Hearing the Divine Voice walking us through life 1697). *Often we know so much more than we experience. Affliction is a reality check. Afflictions seem to grow through life to be more and more.*

7. AFFLICTION BRINGS GOD NEAR: Affliction comes with a promise from God for a special delivery. He comes right o us – with everything we need. Psalm 119:153 Consider my affliction (6040 emotional), and deliver me, For I do not forget **YOUR LAW (Receiving Divine Instruction from the Divine Teacher that is perfect)**.
Afflictions continue, “consider” as You watch me.

Pairs	Verse	Verse
1/7	Psalm 119:50 This is my comfort in my affliction; For Your word has given me life.	Psalm 119:153 Consider my affliction and deliver me, For I do not forget Your law.
2/6	Psalm 119:67 Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word.	Psalm 119:107 I am afflicted very much; Revive me, O Lord, according to Your word.
3/5	Psalm 119:71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes.	Psalm 119:92 Unless Your law had been my delight; I would then have perished in my affliction.
4	Psalm 119:75 I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are right, And that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.	