

**Psalm 119: 57-64; “You are my Portion, O Lord”, A message prepared for
those gathered at the Premier Estates Nursing Home on
January 12th, 2020, by Pastor Paul Rendall.**

The word “portion” is often found in the Bible being used in reference to food given or to an inheritance given to someone. This afternoon I would like to speak to you about both. I want you to remember, if you are a Christian, that God is your Portion, in this life and the next. And more specifically I would have you to remember that Jesus Christ has become your portion in everything related to eternal life. He is the bread of life, whose body was broken for us, and He is the One who has so lived and so died, as a sacrifice for our sins, that He has brought to everyone who believes in Him, an everlasting inheritance.

In the case of the Psalmist David, he uses these words in terms of his relationship with God. Here he declares that the Lord is his portion. These are words which indicate that he had learned some things about walking with God, but that he wanted to learn more. In other words he saw himself as a disciple. He was a learner and a doer in relation to God Himself. He not only wanted to be saved from his past sins, but he wanted to learn to please the Lord in all his ways, and to be pleased with the Lord in every situation of life.

Can you say that the Lord is your portion at this time? Is He your all-in-all? When you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, you come to realize that He is your portion in everything in this life and the next. The believer who wants to walk closely with their Lord will make certain promises in relation to their having the Lord as their portion. This is what it means to try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. You promise the Lord that you will do certain things in relation to the mercy which He has been pleased to show to you and the grace that He has been pleased to give to you every day. What kind of promises should the sincere believer make to their Lord? I haven't time to go through all the verses of this Psalm, but let me give you 2.

1st – There was the promise that he would keep God's words.

(verses 57 and 58)

“You are my portion, O Lord; I have said that I would keep Your words.” This is what happens when a person is converted to Jesus Christ. You receive God's Words concerning the most important thing in your life; the saving of your eternal soul. You come to believe in God's testimony concerning His only-begotten Son in the gospel and you receive it to yourself. But the saving of your soul is not simply a onetime exercise of faith. It is not simply a decision that you made 20 years ago, or however long ago it was when you first trusted in Christ. Faith is an on-going activity in your heart and mind, where you continue to receive all of God's words which you find in the Bible, and you apply them to every situation of your life.

This is one of the ways that you can know that you are a true disciple. It is if you will continue to abide in God's words and the words of His Son Jesus Christ. This is the promise that you should declare to the Lord at your entrance into the narrow gate of taking Christ as your Savior, and beginning to walk upon the path of righteousness. It is your continued and unceasing declaration as you walk along that pathway to heaven. Listen to 1st Corinthians 15: 1 and 2 – “Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.”

Now, it will be good if we can understand that there is no “if” in God's working in relation to your salvation. God is the One who undertakes the work of salvation in the gift of the New Birth, of regenerating your heart; you the sinner. And if He does this mighty work, He actually plants a seed of righteousness in your heart, and you are sealed by His Holy Spirit. Having begun this

good work in your heart and mind, He will continue it until the Day of Christ. But, you will notice that there is an “if” in verse 2. It is an “if” which addresses your response to what God has done. And your responding will show that you really have had a work of grace done in your heart, by Almighty God; a work which is saving. Paul says, that if you hold fast that word which has been preached to you, that Christ died for your sins according to the Scriptures, you will prove yourself to be a true Christian. Holding fast the word, holding fast the truth of the gospel that you believe that you were a great enough sinner that you needed the merit of Christ’s life, and the merit of His death on the cross to be justified in the sight of God; to be declared righteous, and to be sanctified; that is, to become holy and to pursue holiness and righteousness in the way that you live your life.

Your seeing this need that you have, of Christ’s merit and His grace being shown to you, all through your life, is something which you must continue in, no matter what happens to you in your Christian life; you must continue in that truth, in order to finally be saved, and to be with Him, in glory, forever. If you do not see this need, you do not have a true and saving faith; you have believed in vain. And if you have believed in vain, then it sure that you will not be able to keep promises to God, because you do not have grace. But when you believe in Jesus with a saving faith, you begin to know the reality of His power and His presence in your life, helping you to do what is right.

All this progress in righteousness is based on God’s promise to you through Christ, and on the basis of His finished work of redemption. He alone has died upon the cross for your sins. He alone, it is, that can give you the grace to receive and abide in His words. But we must nevertheless very really hold fast that word of the gospel and the words of the Bible and build our life upon them. This is doing the will of God. When you become a Christian you are promising that you will keep God’s words and live by them. You live by faith in Christ, looking for grace and help in your times of need. And therefore, because of the grace that He gives to you, you will continue, every day, to live by word.

You must take God’s words in, just as regularly and just as frequently as you do your daily bread. “For man does not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4: 4) And Joshua 1: 9 and 10 –“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it.” “For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” “Have I not commanded you?” “Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” You see, this is what you need to promise God today, if you would know God and follow Christ, and have strong faith all the way to heaven. You say, “I will take Your words into my heart and I will meditate upon them.” “I will not let them depart from my mouth, but I will so abide in your word that I will commit portions of it to my memory.” This is not legalism. This is love.

The one who loves God makes promises to God, and by Christ’s grace and power, they will go about to keep them. That is making God your portion. Verse 58 tells you where you will find the power to live this way. It says, “I entreated Your favor with my whole heart; be merciful to me according to Your word.” He prayed about it. And the psalmist did not pray casual prayers about these things. It was with his whole heart that he prayed, entreating God’s favor. He didn’t just set himself to do it, thinking that he could do it by his own wisdom, strength, and power. He set himself to do it by humbly pleading that God would have mercy upon him, and grant him this advance in holiness. Advancing in righteousness and holiness does not come from fleshly strength. And, it is does not proceed from having Bible knowledge alone. It will happen when you have the Bible knowledge, and then you pray to God to go forward, to do and keep God’s words. That is true discipleship. That is making progress in holiness.

Then 2nd – There is found here, a promise made by David that he would continue his private devotion to God at all times of the day and night. (verses 61 and 62)

“The cords of the wicked have bound me, but I have not forgotten Your law.” “At midnight I will rise to give thanks to You, because of Your righteous judgments.” It is pretty evident from verse 61, that the wicked people who lived around David, had opposed his pursuit of righteousness and godliness. His life and testimony had probably been such a powerful witness to them, against their sins, and against the way that they were living, that they had taken up persecuting him. When a Christian begins to receive opposition of this kind, they should remember that the greatest way that they can be strong, and the best way that they can endure and triumph through these oppositions is to remember the words and promises of Scripture. David did not forget God’s law. He even rose at midnight to give thanks to God, because of His righteous judgments.

Sometimes it is true that you will find that you cannot sleep during the night. You are troubled and you are restless. But you will find great comfort, great encouragement, and great blessing in seeking God, and reading your Bible, and praying at such times. It may not at all be a time for a sleeping pill. It may be that this is the time that God wants to have dealings with you, over the issues of your soul and your life. Will you not arise to give thanks? Or at least give thanks from your bed? This was how it was with the Apostle Paul and his fellow-preacher Silas when they were at Philippi. In Acts 16 Paul had cast out a spirit of divination from a certain slave girl, and they got into real trouble over it.

Verse 19 says, “But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.” “And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, ‘These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.’” “Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods.” “And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely.” “Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.” “But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening.” “Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed.”

Now if ever there was a time in the history of the Church that that these verses that we are looking at from Psalm 119 were fulfilled, it was this. “The cords of the wicked have bound me, but I have not forgotten Your law.” “At midnight I will rise to give thanks to You, because of Your righteous judgments.” Paul and Silas were bound in prison, and they were laying in the stocks, but they were able to continue their devotion to God both in prayer, and by singing hymns. And God’s righteous judgments of the truth of His Word, the power of His gospel, and His providential intervention to rescue his persecuted preachers all came together that night. People were saved from their sins that night who were never expecting to be saved; the Philippian jailer and all of his household.

What giving of thanks there was then! But there was giving of thanks even before, when Paul and Silas were bound; when they were sore and bruised, from their having been beaten. They had the grace to praise God. And so, we too should commit ourselves to this kind of devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ. And we should remember where this kind of devotion comes from. It comes from having Christ in us, the hope of glory. He lives and dwells in your heart by faith, and it is by His being with you will have the desire and the power to continue in your devotion to God at all times. O dear believers, will you not promise Him anew and afresh that your devotion to Him will continue both day and night, if He will give you the grace? For He is the God of all grace, and He is the helper of all those who will trust in Him.

