

5/9/10

**Series Title: “Joyously Pursuing the Light of God’s Word”**

**Today’s Title:**

***“Ayin: When Oppressed, God Will Not Allow Us to be Crushed”***

Scripture Reading and Text: Psalm 119:121-128

**Introduction:**

c/w II Corinthians 4:7-18

**Premise:**

***When we are blessed, oppressed, or delivered; God is honored***

**Outline:**

**I. The Potentate’s Provision**

**II. The Penitent’s Plea**

**III. The Pleasant Posture**

**I. THE POTENTATE’S PROVISION**

**A. Sovereign holiness**

v.126 *“It is time for the Lord to act, for your law has been broken.”*

- J. I. Packer [see *Atonement*, Gabriel N. E. Fluhrer, p.11]

*“John Owen, the great Puritan...wrote a paragraph in which he summarizes God’s view of sin. Read with care the words that Owen used to describe how the creature acts towards his Creator: disgrace, fraud, blasphemy, enmity, hatred, contempt, rebellion and injury, poison, stench, dung, vomit, polluted blood, plague, pestilence, abominable, and detestable. Sin is essentially the resolve – the mad, utterly blameworthy, but nonetheless, utterly firm resolve – to play God and fight the real God. Sinners resolve to treat themselves as the center of the universe and so they keep God at bay on the outer circumference of their lives – or so they think. They won’t allow the*

Creator to rule over them as he wills to do. If they appeal to God at all, they ask God to act according to their will and for their convenience like a servant who gets them out of trouble and bestows on them good gifts. They never serve him from their heart and only resent the claim to dominion that he makes. This is why people like Luther, Calvin, and Owen say, roundly and without question, that sin wills the fundamental abolition of God. Sin plays God, sin fights God, and sin wishes that God didn't exist at all.”

### **B. Tender responsiveness**

v.122a “Give your servant a pledge of good....”

1. c/w 1 Timothy 1:12-17

2. John R. de Witt [see *Atonement*, p.25]

*The glorious reality of the gospel is that God has opened himself to us. He has prepared himself to enter a new relationship with us, is willing to receive us, and offers us a place in his own family. We, therefore, can sing with the hymn writer: “Depths of mercy can there be? Mercies still reserved for me? Can my God his wrath forebear, me the chief of sinners bear? I have long withstood his grace, long provoked him to his face! Would not harken to his calls, grieved him by a thousand falls.” We can all sing that hymn, and yet the door of divine mercy has not been slammed in our faces.---*

### **C. Decisive deliverance**

v.123 “My eyes long for your salvation and for the fulfillment of your righteous promise.”

Note: This verse deals with deliverance from the treachery of the Psalmist's physical enemies.

c/w Psalm 27:1-14

Note: While the Psalmist here refers to his physical enemies, the believer can take heart in the fact that God delivers us from the great enemy of our souls, the devil himself.

(Illustration from Green #1194)

A man decided he would swim from L.A. to Hawaii. He hired the finest swim coach...and worked out with Olympic gold-medal win-

ners. He left no detail of preparation undone. Finally the big day arrived. He plunged into the Pacific and began to swim. Five...ten...

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fifteen...twenty miles he went. The ocean seemed to be getting more intimidating. The waves were becoming high and the water cold. The one-time friendly ocean was now becoming a severe enemy.

He began to realize that he could never swim to Hawaii; it was just too far. In vain he searched his mind for an alternative, but there was none. Then, as he was gasping for air and about to go down for the third time, a powerboat pulled alongside. With his last ounce of energy he called out, "Save me! Please, save me!" The owner of the boat looked down and said, "Friend, you're in trouble. What you need is the waterproof edition of my book on swimming to Hawaii. It will tell you everything you need to know. Here, catch it." And then, off he went to Hawaii. Obviously, the swimmer needed more than a book.

Well let's suppose that as the swimmer was gasping for breath and the powerboat pulled alongside, and he cried, "Save me, please!" the owner said, "Friend, you're in trouble. What you need is someone to show you how to swim. Here, watch me." At that, the boater jumped into the water and said, "The secret is the Australian crawl. Watch my head. See, it's breathe – blow, breathe – blow, breathe – blow. Now friend, it won't be easy, but if you'll just follow my example, you are sure to make it." And then he climbed back into his boat and off he went to Hawaii. Obviously the swimmer needed more than an example, a model.

Third scenario: as the swimmer was gasping for breath the powerboat pulled alongside and he cried, "Save me, please!" The owner leaned over the rail and said, "Friend, you're in trouble! Even worse, you're drowning! Here, let me save you." Then the owner reached over and grabbed the swimmer, pulled him into the boat, set him down and gave him some cookies and chocolate milk. After some time, the owner reappeared on the deck and said to the well-rested swimmer, "You know, I saved you from certain death. I pulled you out of the water, set you down and gave you cookies and chocolate milk. Now we are only a few hundred miles from Hawaii, and I think it's time that you did something. So, you lazy guy, get back in the water and swim!" Obviously the swimmer is right back where he started, and certainly he needed more than an occasional boost when things get rough.

Fourth scenario: As the swimmer was gasping for breath and the boat pulled alongside, and he cried out, "Save me! Please!" the

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owner leaned over the rail and said, "Friend, you're in trouble! Even worse, you're drowning! Let me save you." And the owner reached over and grabbed the swimmer and pulled him into the boat. Then he set him down and gave him some cookies and chocolate milk. Eventually Hawaii came into view and the owner headed for the dock. He tied up his boat, picked up the swimmer, carried him across the dock, and put him down on terra firma of Hawaii.

Which of these was truly the savior of the drowning man? The last one, of course. He was the only one who rescued the swimmer from certain death and took him to a place where there was no threat of drowning again. In a similar manner, God did not write the Bible merely to give us an instruction book on "How to Get to Heaven." Nor did Christ come to show us how to live a life that would be acceptable to God. Nor did Christ come to help us out when we needed a little extra boost, but who still expected us to do our part. No, Christ was like the owner who did it all for the drowning swimmer and so became his savior.

## **II. THE PENITENT'S PLEA**

### **A. Shield me from adversaries**

v.121b, 122b

*"...do not leave me to my oppressors."*

*"...let not the insolent oppress me."*

- Charles Haddon Spurgeon

*"He who, as far as his power goes, has been doing right, may hope to be delivered from his superiors when attempts are made by them to do him wrong. If I will not oppress others, I may hopefully pray that others may not oppress me. A course of upright conduct is one which gives us boldness in appealing to the Great Judge for deliverance from the injustice of others. Nor is this kind of pleading to be censured as self-righteous: when we are dealing with God as to our shortcomings, we use a very different tone from that with which we face the censures of our fellow-men; when they are in the question, and we are guiltless towards them, we are justified in pleading our innocence."*

*“Thine interposition will answer the purpose of my rescue: when the proud see that thou art my advocate they will hide their heads. We should have been crushed beneath our proud adversary the devil if our Lord Jesus had not stood between us and the accuser, and become a surety for us. It is by his suretiship that we escape like a bird from the snare of the fowler. What a blessing to be able to leave our matters in our Surety’s hands, knowing that all will be well, since he has an answer for every accuser, a rebuke for every reviler.*

*Good men dread oppression, for it makes even a wise man mad, and they send up their cries to heaven for deliverance; nor shall they cry in vain, for the Lord will undertake the cause of his servants, and fight their battles against the proud. The word “servant” is wisely used as a plea for favour for himself, and the word “proud” as an argument against his enemies. It seems to be inevitable that proud men should become oppressors, and that they should take most delight in oppressing really gracious men.”*

**B. Shower me with abundant love**

v.124a *“Deal with your servant according to your steadfast love....”*

[see *Atonement*, pp.46-47]

- James Montgomery Boice related the following:

*William Cowper, a metaphysical poet of the eighteenth century, had a very troubled life. He had a miserable childhood; his mother died when he was only six years old and he was sent off to a boarding school where he was bullied because he was small and weak. He had a fragile mind that gave way on more than one occasion. Twice he tried to commit suicide, and at last, in the year 1756, he was committed to a private lunatic asylum under the care of a man named Dr. Cotton. As was often the case in those days, those deemed lunatics were treated very badly. But Dr. Cotton was a Christian man and he worked very carefully to bring this distraught man out of his*

depression. He tried to bring Cowper the gospel, which was not an easy task. Cowper was so troubled by his sin that he

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would cry out in the presence of Dr. Cotton, "My sin! My sin! Oh, for some fountain to open for my cleansing!" But he did not know of any such fountain. Dr. Cotton began to work with him, and by the grace of God, the time came when Cowper found that fountain. Here is the way Cowper told the tale, in his own words:

***But the happy period which was to shake off my fetters, and afford me a clear opening of the free mercy of God in Christ Jesus, now arrived. I flung myself into a chair near the window, and seeing a Bible there, ventured once more to apply to it for comfort and instruction. The first verse I saw, was the 25<sup>th</sup> of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Romans: "Whom God hath sent forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."***

***Immediately I received strength to believe it, and the full beams of the Sun of Righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement he had made, my pardon sealed in his blood, and all the fullness and completeness of his justification. In a moment I believed, and received the gospel.***

Cowper had problems later on in his life, but this was a turning point. Out of that experience, he wrote some of our greatest hymns. Indeed, many of them have to do with the atonement.

***There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins,***

***And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.***

***The dying thief rejoice to see that fountain in his day,  
And there may I, as vile as he, wash all my sins away.  
E'er since by faith I saw the stream life flowing wounds supply,***

***Redeeming love has been my theme and shall be till I die.***

And to that all God's people, who love the atonement with Cowper, can say, "Amen!"

**C. Show me your truth**

v.124b, 125

*"...and teach me your statutes."*

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*"I am your servant; give me understanding, that I may know your testimonies!"*

c/w Matthew 18:1-4

c/w Matthew 11:25-30

### **III. THE PLEASANT POSTURE**

#### **A. Treasured Testimony**

v.127

*"Therefore I love your commandments above gold, above, fine gold."*

- Albert Barnes

*"The idea is that the truth of God, as revealed, is more grateful to the heart, or affords more pleasure to the soul, than that which is esteemed as the highest luxury to the palate. The meaning is, that it is loved; it is pleasant; it is agreeable; it is not regarded merely as necessary, and admitted to the soul because it is needful, as medicine is, but it is received into the soul because it is delighted in, or is more agreeable and pleasant than the most luscious article of food is to the taste. To this, also, the heart of every one who "has tasted the good word of God" will respond."*

- Matthew Henry

*"David here, as often in this Psalm, professes the great love he had to the word and law of God; and to evidence the sincerity of it, observe, 1. The degree of his love. He loved his Bible better than he loved his money – above gold, yea, above fine gold. Gold, fine gold, is what most men set their hearts upon; nothing charms them and dazzles their eyes so much as gold does. It is fine gold, a fine thing in their eyes; they will venture their souls, their God, their all, to get and keep it. But David saw that the word of God answers all purposes better than money does, for it enriches the soul toward God; and therefore he loved it better than Gold, for it had done that for*

*him which gold could not do, and would stand him in stead when the wealth of the world would fail him.”*

**B. Transformed thinking**

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v.128

*“Therefore I consider all your precepts to be right;  
I hate every false way.”*

1. positive

Note: Because of the true Christian’s real love for God, he commits himself to the revelation of God, which is the Bible.

c/w Job 1:20-22

2. negative

c/w I Timothy 1:3-11

**Conclusion:** (Illustration from Nelson, pp.601-601)

Have you heard about the Chinese bamboo tree? The Chinese people plant the seed; they water and fertilize it, but the first year nothing happens. The second year they water and fertilize it, and still nothing happens. The third and fourth years they water and fertilize it, and nothing happens. Then the fifth year they water and fertilize it, and sometime during the course of the fifth year, in a period of approximately six weeks, the Chinese bamboo tree grows roughly ninety feet.

The question is, Did it grow ninety feet in six weeks or did it grow ninety feet in five years? The obvious answer is that it grew ninety feet in five years, because had they not applied the water and fertilizer each year there would have been no Chinese bamboo tree.

All of us have had these “Chinese bamboo tree” experiences...

**Premise:**

***When we are blessed, oppressed, or delivered; God is honored***