

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

**Today’s Title:**

**“Koph: The Believer’s Cry for God to Hear Our Crying”**

Scripture Reading and Text: Psalm 119:145-152

**Introduction:** (Illustration from Nelson, pp.361-362)

As A. W. Tozer points out, God cannot change, for all change must be in one of three directions: (1) From better to worse; (2) From worse to better; (3) From one order of being to another. God’s perfections rule out all possibilities.

“The law of mutation,” writes Tozer, “belongs to a fallen world, but God is immutable, and in Him men of faith find at last eternal permanence.

“In coming to Him at any time we need not wonder whether we shall find Him in a receptive mood. He is always receptive to misery and need, as well as to love and faith. He does not keep office hours nor set aside periods when He will see no one. Neither does He change His mind about anything. Today, this moment, He feels toward His creatures, toward babies, toward the sick, the fallen, the sinful, exactly as He did when He sent His only-begotten Son into the world to die for mankind.

“God never changes moods or cools off in His affections or loses enthusiasm....

“I am the Lord, I change not.””

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- Vance Havner

*We need not worry for fear the faith of our fathers will have no relevance today. Times have changed, they tell us, but time makes no difference to the great I AM. He outlasts all our little systems; they have their day and cease to be. With Him a thousand years are as a day and a day as a thousand years. It would be amusing if it were not so pathetic, the concern of those who are afraid the Gospel will be out of date. It is never*

*out of date, for it is dateless, it bares the postmark of no age or time. "The Old-Time Religion" is a misnomer for it is not merely old-time, but new-time, any-time, all-the-time."*

**Premise: *Let us make God our first, final, and only resource***

**Outline:**

**I. Desperate Prayer**

**II. Determined Pursuit**

**III. Discrepant Purposes**

**I. DESPERATE PRAYER**

**A. Energy of the petitioner**

v.145a *"With my whole heart I cry...."*

1. This is a vehement plea

c/w Mark 14:32-36

c/w Luke 22:39-46

2. This is a sincere plea

c/w Romans 8:22-27

3. This is NOT careless formality

4. This is NOT dead, lifeless activity

**B. Earnestness of the plea**

1. v.145b *"...answer me, O Lord!"*

2. v.146b *"...save me...."*

3. v.149a *"Hear my voice...."*

contr/w I Kings 18:20-29

4. v.149b *"...give me life."*

- Charles Haddon Spurgeon

*"This is often the very best way of delivering us from trouble – to give us more life that we may escape from death; and to add more strength to that life that we may not be overloaded with its burdens. Observe, that he asks to receive quickening according to God's judgment, that is, in such a way as should be consistent with infinite wisdom and prudence. God's methods of communicating greater vigour to our spiritual life are exceedingly wise; it would probably be in vain for us to*

*attempt to understand them; and it will be our wisdom to wish to receive grace, not according to our notion of how it should come to us, but according to God's heavenly method of bestowing it. It is his prerogative to make alive as well as to kill, and that sovereign act is best left to his infallible judgment. Hath he not already given us to have life more and more abundantly? "Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence."*

**C. Engagement of the pilgrimage**

v.147a *"I rise before dawn and cry for help...."*

v.146a *"I call to you...."*

- Martin Luther [Tan #4614]

Luther, when most pressed with his gigantic toils, said, *"I have so much to do, that I cannot get on without three hours a day of praying."*

- General Havelock [Tan #4614]

General Havelock rose at four, if the hour for marching was six, rather than lose the precious privilege of communion with God before setting out.

- Sir Matthew Hale [Tan #4614]

Sir Matthew Hale says, *"If I omit praying, and reading God's Word, in the morning, nothing goes well all day."*

- John Quincy Adams [Tan #399]

John Quincy Adams said, *"I have for many years made it a practice to read through the Bible once a year. My custom is to read four or five chapters every morning immediately after rising from my bed. It employs about an hour of my time, and seems to me the most suitable manner of beginning the day. In what light soever we regard the Bible, whether with reference to revelation, to history, or to morality, it is an invaluable and inexhaustible mine of knowledge and virtue."*

- George Washington [Tan #4524]

Robert Lewis of Fredricksburg, Virginia, was Washington's private secretary. During the first part of the presidency, he said that he accidentally witnessed Washington's private devotions, both morning and evening. He saw him in a kneeling

posture, with an open Bible before him; and he said that he believed such was his daily practice. His custom was to go to his library at four o'clock in the morning for devotions.

- John Wesley [Tan #4536, and #7668]

Warren W. Wiersbe, pastor of Moody Church, said *“One of the most moving experiences of my life came when I stepped from John Wesley’s bedroom in his London home into the little adjacent prayer room. Outside the house was the traffic noise of City Road, but inside that prayer chamber was the holy hush of God.*

*“Its only furnishings were a walnut table which held a Greek New Testament and a candlestick, a small stool and a chair. When he was in London, Wesley entered the room early each morning to read God’s Word and pray.”*

*The guide in Wesley’s home told me: “This room was the powerhouse of Methodism!”*

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John Wesley averaged three sermons a day for 54 years preaching a total of more than 44,000 times. In doing this he traveled by horseback and carriage more than 250,000 miles, or about 5,000 miles a year.

His published works include a 4 volume commentary on the whole Bible, a dictionary of the English language, a 5 volume work on natural philosophy, a 4 volume work on church history; histories of England and Rome; grammars on the Hebrew, Latin, Greek, French and English languages; 3 works on medicine, 6 volumes of church music; 7 volumes of sermons and controversial papers. He also edited a library of 50 volumes known as “The Christian Library.”

He was greatly devoted to pastoral work. Later, he had the care of “all the churches” upon him. He arose at 4:00 a.m., and worked solidly through to 10:00 p.m., allowing brief periods for meals. In the midst of all this work he declared: “I have more hours of private retirement than any man in England.”

At age 83, he was piqued to discover that he could not write more than 15 hours a day without hurting his eyes; and at the

age of 86 he was ashamed to admit that he could not preach more than twice a day. In his 86<sup>th</sup> year, he preached in almost every shire in England and Wales, and often rode 30 to 50 miles a day.

- Alexander Maclaren [Tan #4535]

Dr. Alexander Maclaren was one of the clearest Bible Expositors of the age. How he became such a Bible scholar is worthy of note. One who in his early ministry was an assistant to the great Baptist preacher, once asked him what he contributed most of all to his success.

Doctor Maclaren, after deprecating the idea that he had attained “success,” said that he owed all that was in himself and his ministry to the habit, never broken, of spending one hour a day “alone with the Eternal.” The hour which he took was from 9 to 10 in the morning. His assistant said that he was sometimes allowed to be in the room with the pastor” “but no word passed between us. In his well-worn armchair he sat, with his big Bible on his knees, sometimes reading its pages, more frequently his hand over his face.

During that hour he did not allow himself to read even the Bible for texts, or as a student. It was read as a child would read a letter from an absent father; as a loving heart would drink in again the message from a loved one far away.”

## **II. DETERMINED PURSUIT**

### **A. Commitment**

v.145c “*I will keep your statutes.*”

Heb. word = “*preserve*” “*hide*” “*maintain things entrusted to me*”

c/w John 17:12-19

### **B. Consideration**

v.146c “*...that I may observe your testimonies.*”

Heb. word = “*protect*” “*pay close attention to*”

Psalm 119:9-11

### **C. Confidence**

v.147b “*I hope in your words.*”

c/w Psalm 124:1-8

- Hymn by Isaac Watts, #594

*Soon as I heard my Father say,  
“Ye children, seek my grace,”  
My heart replied, without delay,  
“I’ll seek my Father’s face.”*

*Let not thy face be hid from me,  
Nor frown my soul away;  
God of my life, I’ll fly to thee  
In each distressing day.*

*Should friends and kindred, near and dear,  
Leave me to want, or die,  
My God will make my life his care,  
And all my needs supply.*

*Wait on the Lord, ye trembling saints,  
And keep your courage up;  
He’ll raise your spirit when it faints,  
And far exceed your hope.*

#### **D. Contemplation**

v.148 *“My eyes are awake before the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promises.”*

- Bernard of Clairvaux, b. 1090; d. 1153 [Chr. Quotes]  
- wrote the hymns “Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee”  
and “O Sacred Head Now Wounded”

#### **Four Kinds of Contemplation**

*“The first and the greatest is to wonder at majesty. This demands a heart made pure, so that freed from vices and released from sin, it can ascend easily to heavenly things. Sometimes this contemplation holds the watcher rapt in amazement and ecstasy, if only for a moment.*

*A second kind of contemplation is necessary for this man. He needs to look on the judgments of God. While this contempla-*

tion strikes fear into the onlooker because it is indeed frightening, it drives out vices, strengthens virtues, initiates into wisdom, protects humility. Humility is the true and solid foundation of virtues. For it humility were to collapse, the building up of the virtues will fall down.

The third kind of contemplation is occupied (or rather at leisure) in remembering kindnesses and, so as to avoid ingratitude, it urges him who remembers to love his Benefactor. Of such says the prophet, speaking to the Lord, "They shall declare the memory of the abundant of your sweetness."

The fourth contemplation, which forgets what is past, rests wholly in the expectation of what is promised, which nourishes patience and nerves the arm of perseverance, for what is promised is eternal."

### **III. DISCREPANT PURPOSES**

#### **A. Evil pestilence**

v.150

1. Evil is never far away
2. Evil is on the prowl to destroy us
3. Evil is grounded in falsehood

c/w II Corinthians 10:3-6

#### **B. Eternal provision**

v.151

1. God is never far away
2. God is on alert to preserve us
3. God is truthful in all respects

- Thomas Manton

On God's part, it is seen in his readiness to hear our prayers: "Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am." God is at hand when we knock at Heaven's gates: he answereth presently, saying, And what would you have? If God should make an offer to us as Jonathan did to David, "Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee"; we should think then we should never want more. What would the world give for such a promise from an earthly potentate? You have it from God, if you like the condition: "Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall

*give thee the desires of thine heart.” Thou canst not desire anything regularly, and consisting with the condition of the covenant, with thy delight in God, but thou shalt have it.*

c/w v.152 “Long have I known from your testimonies that you have founded them forever.”

**Conclusion:** (Illustration from Nelson, pp.359-360)

The hymn “Great is Thy Faithfulness” was written by Thomas Chisholm, who was born Lincoln-like in a log cabin in Kentucky. As a young adult, he was converted through the ministry of evangelist H. C. Morrison. Chisholm’s health was unstable, and he alternated between bouts of illness and gainful employment in which he did everything from journalism to insurance to evangelistic work. Through all the ups and downs, he discovered new blessings from God every morning. Lamentations 3 became precious to him, and he wrote this hymn after thirty years of serving Christ.

It was relatively unknown until popularized around the world by George Beverly Shea and the choirs at the Billy Graham Crusades.

At Graham’s 1954 Harringay Crusade, Wilbur Konkel first heard “Great in Thy Faithfulness,” and a flood of memories coursed through his mind. He recalled the dark nights of World War II, when London was nearly bombed to oblivion. “Each night as the enemy planes came over,” Konkel wrote, “we cast our care upon Him. I quoted (this Scripture) to myself. I used it in my prayers. Those were dark days. At times they seemed hopeless. It was in those darkest hours that God proved His faithfulness to me. We were so near death. Yet it is the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning.”

**Premise:** *Let us make God our first, final, and only resource*