

The Weekly Word
September 19-25, 2016

As the cooler breezes of Autumn fills the air, may the refreshing breath of God's Word fill your lives. Happy reading...
Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

Monday, September 19: Psalm 117-118- The Lord...

Although not directly linked, these two Psalms declare and praise the greatness of the Lord. *For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD.*

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. (Ps 117:2 & 118:1)

As I read the lengthy Psalm 118 the prominence of 'the Lord' was striking.

- *The Lord was with me* (6 &7),
- *I cried to the Lord* (5),
- *It is better to take refuge in the Lord than...* (8&9)
- *So and so surround me, but in the name of the Lord I will cut them down* (10, 11, 12)

And so the Psalm declares on and on. The Lord is the difference in the Psalmist's life. In battle and in life the Lord makes the difference because *the Lord is God* (27) and the Lord is *my God, and I will praise you; you are my God, and I will exalt you* (28).

The flow of this Psalm burrowed into me... The Lord, the Lord, the Lord has done mighty things because the Lord is God and He is my God.

I joined the Psalmist in DECLARING that the Lord is my God and I recalled things He has done and how mighty is His name. As I did this a surge of joy and presence filled me. The Lord is the same yesterday, today and forever. As He has been with the Psalmist, so He will be with me. My memories are living proof to the presence, power and activity of the Lord. How could I not join the choruses of praise to the Lord?

Praise the LORD, all you nations; extol him, all you peoples. For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD (Psalm 117). *Alleluia. Amen*

Tuesday, September 20: Psalm 119- Obedience...

I confess that sometime I dread Psalm 119. "It is sooooo long," I think. I am saddened to admit this, but it is true. And speaking out this thought shows me that at times my 'devotions' are more ritual rather than relationship and devotion...

Forgive me, Lord. Forgive me.

Today, however, was not one of those mornings. I read through the Psalm slowly, at a deliberate pace. Each stanza spoke clearly... like a hammer drill, it pierced its way deeply into me. Obedience. Obedience. Obedience is the word for the day... for a life surrendered to the Lord. It appeared throughout the Psalm.

Oh, Lord, may Your truth settle deeply into my soul and my being.

I could have chosen words from any stanza but I decided upon the first. It sets the tone and the theme for the entire Psalm.

Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD. Blessed are those who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart—they do no wrong but follow his ways (1-3).

Blessed are those who walk according to Your Word... who keep Your statutes. Obedience pounds the hammer drill. Obedience. Do, walk, keep God's Word.

I wish it were that easy, just a singular decision of the will. But like all great endeavors it is much greater than a single decision. It takes endurance. It takes will power. It takes the ability to master the right skills, like knowing the Word. And it takes the inner work of God, the Holy Spirit, rooting out sin and all its vestiges that are scattered widely and deeply in my life.

Lord, I pray that I am up to the task and I ask You to strengthen me to play my part faithfully as You work Your cleaning power within me. Lord, I pray this so that I might walk according to Your word and keep all of Your statutes, that my life might be an offering of praise to You. Alleluia. Amen.

Wednesday, September 21: Psalm 120- Longing for a new 'home'...

Despair engulfs the Psalmist. He longs for a change... a new home of peace. Most of us have been there. I know I have. Tumultuous times, difficult times, times when those around us seek to drag us down to their pit of despair.

The Psalmist leans into the Lord...

I call on the LORD in my distress, and he answers me. Save me, LORD, from lying lips and from deceitful tongues.

The Psalmist has learned the truth. Only God can change our circumstances, only the Lord can move us from the land of despair to the place of peace. Whether literal or descriptive, it matters not. I know I have faced those times when my station in life is wracked with voices trying to change me in ways that are not compatible with my faith in Jesus.

God whispers to me this morning... trust Me. Call out to Me. *Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest* (Matthew 11:28). Good times, bad times, horrendous times, God is there with us. Turn to Him. Reach out to Him. Call out with parched lips, *save me, Lord*. And wait to see what the Lord will do...

This is the word that fills my heart as I sit with Jesus, the Father and the Spirit this morning.

Help me to remember Your Word, O Lord, when days of heartache come. You alone are my strength and refuge. You have become and will always be my refuge. Praise be to You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Thursday, September 22: Psalm 121- Soaring with the Lord...

This Psalm simply makes my heart sing... it soars with the wonder of the opening

I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

I can feel my heart soaring as I picture lifting my eyes... I, too, shout with the Psalmist, *My help also comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth*. God is my protector, God is my helper. God watches over me.

Some mornings are pensive, some find me hurting, but today the Psalm invades my life and carries me to declare the Lord is my sovereign and my protector.

My life is in God's hands and I am most comfortable there. No matter what comes my way, I know God is for me and God is watching over me.

Oh, Lord, I sit before You this morning and rest under Your watchful eye looking out for me. I am Yours and You are mine. Blessed be the name of You, Lord. Amen and Amen.

Friday, September 23: Psalm 122- God's presence...

I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD." Our feet are standing in your gates, Jerusalem (1-2).

Reading this Psalm, my thoughts pictured pilgrims marching to Jerusalem, singing and praising as they travel. They made it. They crossed the gates; they are home. They are now in God's home, the city of the Great King.

My thoughts flipped to my 'home coming,' when I, too, will stand in the city of the Great King. I'm thinking not of some physical place on earth, but eternity... heaven, the new heaven and new earth, where God will reign forever and ever.

I'm not thinking of death or the process of dying, rather I am picturing that instant transportation into God's full glory, that moment when faith becomes sight.

Oh, what a day that will be... to see and hear the voice of the Savior, to be surrounded by throngs of witnesses who have kept and passed along the faith throughout the ages, to be in the presence of absolute glory, to raise my voice with the millions singing to Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb who is and who was...

I just sat with these thoughts filling my head and heart. The pressures and good things of this world faded away, paled by the wonder and awe of that day when I am home in the city of my God.

Until then I hold on, allowing faith to breathe its best into me, praying that my life during these intervening years brings glory to my King, That it will introduce others to the King and fights for justice that will honor my King.

Praise be to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. You alone deserve honor and praise and power and glory. Amen and Amen.

Saturday, September 24: Psalm 123- I need you Lord ...

Short and directly to the point, "I need you Lord" is the essence of this Psalm. *I lift up my eyes to you, to you who sit enthroned in heaven (1), in tones of the Psalmist. Have mercy on us, LORD, have mercy on us, for we have endured no end of contempt (3).*

Thus we have the heart of the Psalm. I look to You, God. I need You, O Lord!

Sometimes the simplest prayers are the most profound and heartfelt.

God does not judge our prayers by their length or their gravitas. No, God looks to the heart of the pray-er. Honest, real words find the ears of the Lord.

I am reminded by this Psalm at times when illustrious words escaped me, and all I could do was cry out, "God help." No flowing verse, no descriptions of God's Majesty, just a heartfelt cry for help or mercy.

God hears our cries. The Psalmist knew it and I know it...

Oh, God, thank You for being there with and for me. Thank You that when my words are few because my heart is hurting or scared You still hear me. Thank You, thank You, Thank You, Lord, for all Your care and love and for being there ALL THE TIME. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Sunday, September 25, 2016, Sunday Worship

If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.

If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at office@pcogonline.org.

Click [here](#) for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.