

Part 2 – Remember the Works of the Lord

In part 1 we learned that this was another Psalm of Asaph; and while we don't know when it was written, the Psalmist laments for some terrible trouble(s) that were happening; either to him, or to his nation, or both. And while he did pray and seek God's help, he only found it to make his misery more intense *because* he had not yet gotten an answer from God. And that caused him to continue to think *only* about the negative things that were happening; insomuch that he even wondered if God really cared and had stopped being merciful and gracious. So, he truly was overwhelmed by misery, and frustration, at what was going on. And that is because (as the subject of this Psalm reveals) he was 'outside the Sanctuary'; meaning, he was not truly drawing near to God, *even though he had been praying to God*. And that's because he was so *distracted* by his own misery (i.e. 'self') that he got on a 'pity party' and *forgot* to keep his heart and mind *where it should be*: on our Heavenly Father. But thankfully, he won't 'wallow in his misery' for long. As the 'selah' at the end of the last verse (9) revealed, there is only *one* sure remedy to his misery; and that is by occupying his heart and mind with God's Word (the truth) *instead of his own feelings*. And so, we'll now begin to see that, once the Psalmist begins to think about (remember) all that God has done for Him and his nation (i.e. 'count his blessings'), his attitude changes, *quite remarkably*, for the *better*...

Psalm 77

10 And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.

11 I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.

So, as the Psalmist pondered his troubles, he finally realized that doing so is what caused his 'infirmity', which means, figuratively, *to be weak, sick, afflicted*; or (causatively) *to grieve, make sick* (#2470). In other words, the Psalmist is finally realizing that thinking upon his own negative feelings (grief and misery) was only making them worse. And that's why he then said he would remember the '*years of the right hand of the most High*'. The use of the 'right hand' is symbolic for power (Ex 15:6,12; Ps 16:8; Isa 41:10) simply because the right hand has been (throughout the ages) the dominant hand of most people (which is to no offense for the left-handed people out there). So, to remember '*years of the right hand of the most High*' simply means he will *finally* begin to stop thinking about his own personal turmoil and *remember* how powerful God is by remembering *His* works. The words '**Most High**' are the Hebrew word '*Elyown*' (sometimes spelled as '*Elyon*') (#5945), which means an *elevation*, i.e. (adj.) *lofty*. And, as title of God it means, *the Supreme*. He is the 'possessor of heaven and earth' (Gen 14:18-20), Who divides the nations 'their inheritance' (Detu 32:8). In Ps 83:18, He is 'over all the earth'.

So, the Psalmist is *finally* beginning to *re-direct his mind* from his own personal feelings (which was making his misery *worse*) to thinking about our Heavenly Father's power and might (i.e. His

abilities). Which is why he then goes on to say that he would *remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old*. Now, the word ‘LORD’ here is **Yahh** or **Yah** (#3050), which is a contraction for God’s sacred name **Yehovah**, #3068, and means the same thing (**self-existent** and **eternal**). Yah is Yehovah in a special sense and relation, which his Yehovah as having BECOME our Salvation (first occurrence Ex 15:2). He Who IS, and WAS, and IS TO COME. And the word ‘**wonders**’ here means **a miracle** (#6382). Indeed, there are *many* mighty works and wonders (miracles) that the Lord (Yehovah) has done! But, the point to remember here is that: it is the Psalmist *remembering* the Lord’s (Yehovah’s) mighty works and wonders (miracles) that is going to *get him out of his misery* (pity party, depression). As the Psalmist of 119 (likely king Hezekiah) pointed out...

49 Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.

*50 **This is my comfort in my affliction:** for thy word hath quickened me.*

51 The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from thy law.

*52 I remembered thy judgments of old, O LORD; **and have comforted myself**.*

Ps 119:49-52

This Psalmist also found great comfort in remembering God’s mighty works, which he explains as judgments of old. Indeed, God’s word does ‘*quickeneth*’ our heart and mind (John 6:63) **because it gives us hope** (Rom 8:24-25) by reminding us of God’s power, righteousness and *faithfulness* in punishing the wicked (which saves the righteous from them) and rewarding the righteous. As Ps 145:20 points out: *The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy*. And 2 Thess 3:3 also reminds us that *the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil...*

Psalm 77

12 I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.

The word ‘**meditate**’ here means, by implication, **to ponder** (#1897) and the word ‘**work**’ means **an act** or **work** (#6467) while the word ‘**talk**’ actually means **to ponder**, i.e. (by implication) **converse** (*with oneself*, and hence, *aloud*) or (transitively) **utter** (#7878). And then the word ‘**doings**’ means **an exploit** (achievement) **of God** (#5949). So again, the Psalmist is realizing he needs to get off his ‘pity party’ and re-direct His mind to our Heavenly Father. He needs to think about all that God has done, and is thus able to do, because that’s the *only* thing that will comfort him and give him the strength to get through the troubling times he’s in. And this is a *vital* part of the spiritual war (Eph 6). For *all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution* (2 Tim 3:12). But, thankfully, the Word of God teaches us how to endure the hard times. And we do that by *disciplining* our heart and mind **not to dwell on the negatives**. While it’s true we must face reality, and deal with what’s going on, we can’t let our emotions overwhelm us. While we might be going through hard times, we’ve got to remember that our Heavenly Father has promised that:

so long as we remain faithful to Him, He'll *never* let anything happen to us that we can't endure. He'll *always* give us the strength, and understanding, we need to resist (and reject) all temptations that come, as well as to endure (and make it through) all the hard times. As 1 Cor 10:13 says: *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but **God is faithful**, who will not suffer [allow] you to be tempted [or tested] above that ye are able; but will with the temptation [trials] also make a way to escape [an exit, #1545], that ye may be able to bear [endure #5297] it.* And this is something we must keep firmly in our heart and mind so we remember not to let hard times, trials and emotional experiences to overwhelm us. Always remember that, so long as you don't forsake God, He won't ever forsake you! And that's why this Psalmist says he'll continue to think about God's Works and His great accomplishments. He knew it would remind him that God is *able* to help him through the hard times. And, in his letter to the Philippians, Paul also teaches us how to do this...

4 Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.

5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

*6 **Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.***

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

*8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are **honest**, whatsoever things are **just**, whatsoever things are **pure**, whatsoever things are **lovely**, whatsoever things are of **good report**; if there be any **virtue**, and if there be any **praise**, **think on these things.***

*9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, **do: and** the God of peace shall be with you.*

Phil 4:4-9

Paul teaches us not only to rejoice in the Lord (YHVH) – meaning to rejoice in every kind of circumstance we're in – but also to and to be moderate (self-controlled) in all that we do. In 2 Thess 5:16 he also tells us to 'rejoice evermore'. But he then goes on to say that we should also not be anxious about anything; the word '**careful**' here is #3309 an actually means ***to be anxious about***. Instead of being scared, worried or anxious about anything, we should take our concerns, fears, worries and anxieties to God in prayer; but, again, an important part of that (as the Psalmist was beginning to realize) is to also make sure to give our Heavenly Father praise, and thanks, for all He has done for us. But, why is this? Because it's a vital part of the spiritual warfare (Eph 6). Satan *wants* us to get distracted from God's Word (reality) and he does this in several ways. First off, he likes to plague us with 'bad thoughts' to get us stressed to the point that we desire some 'relief' from them. And *he does not want us turning our mind and heart to our Heavenly Father for help*; but rather, to our own selfish desires for a temporary 'relief'. That's why people love music, tv, food and all sorts of other entertainment that lead our mind away from Christ Jesus. While those things are not necessarily bad, when we *set our heart on them* (instead of God's

Word) they actually become idols to us (Col 3:5) and *that is* bad! But Paul tells us we must learn to counter all of the bad news (and our negative emotions) with information, knowledge and understanding of things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, virtuous and praiseworthy.

In other words, ***we must purposely work to counterbalance all of the bad news (and our own negative emotions) with the truth.*** We can't let all of the discouraging news (or negative emotions) from the world go into our minds and hearts *unchallenged and unbalanced*. **It must be deliberately counterbalanced.** Of course, it takes discipline to do this, but we have to start somewhere. You aren't able to run ten miles the first day you start running. It takes small steps to condition your body to be able to do more. And so it is with our heart and mind. Thus, it takes *disciplining* our inner man (heart and mind) to *deliberately* work to remember, and compare, what we've been given - and what we're charged with doing for Jesus Christ - with what is going on in the world. That's why the Word tells us to 'remember the days of old' (Deut 32:7, Ps 77:5, 145:5, 119:52; Isa 46:9) so we can remember all that God has done for His children. And we're also supposed to remember His promises (Heb 6:12, Rom 8:25). As Rom 15:4 says, *for whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope*. Studying and remembering God's Word is what comforts and strengthens us (giving us hope), *which also makes us patience*. And we should have patience, as Heb 10:36, 12:1, James 5:7-11 and Rev 14:12 tell us. In short, learning to put God at the forefront of our mind (and not 'self') gives us a rejoicing and thankful attitude, which is what enables us to persevere through all the hard times.

And Paul's advice came directly from the Holy Spirit, so we know that his wisdom is from God Almighty. Further, Paul was not a hypocrite; he knew how to advise us of this vital part in the spiritual war because *this is what he had to do daily*. Paul experience so much suffering when he spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ – much more than any of us have ever had to. Yet, he found a way, a right balance, *in whatever circumstance he was in*. As he said in Phil 4:12-13: *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*. In other words, **it was his relationship with Jesus Christ that enabled him to endure all things because Christ always gave him the strength to overcome negative thoughts (and emotions) about his circumstance – and this is a key point to the spiritual war that we are all in**. Further, this didn't happen 'magically' to Paul – *he had to work* at *training his mind* to think upon the truth, as well as disciplining his heart not to have sinful desires, emotions intentions, bitterness, jealousy or greed (etc.).

And we must do likewise. In his second letter to his protégé, Timothy, Paul said: *for God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind* (2 Tim 1:7). The word 'sound' here is *sophronismos* (#4995) and it means: **discipline**, i.e. **self-control**. Yes, you read that right; **a sound (healthy) mind is a disciplined and self-controlled mind**. It even

comes from a word that means *to **make** of sound mind* or *to **discipline or correct*** (#4995). And, because God has given us free will to do with our mind and heart as we want, it's therefore up to us to put out the effort to *discipline* our mind and learn to control it. But thankfully, as Paul said in Phil 4:13 and also in Eph 3:16, the Holy Spirit *will* help us to learn to control (discipline) our mind and heart *when He sees we're sincerely trying*. And it's also wise to ask God (in Jesus' name) for the will power (internal strength) to be able to discipline and control our mind and heart, so we *can* obey Him *from the heart* – so we can counterbalance all the bad news – so we can stop the lustful, prideful, greedy, selfish, jealous and envious (etc.) thoughts and desires that pop up into our heart and mind on a daily basis (for all of us). As Rom 8:26 says of those who are truly 'walking in the Spirit' (i.e. studying God's Word sincerely and consistently and striving to obey it from the heart), the Holy Spirit helps us with our 'infirmities', which means *our weaknesses*. But we've got to do our part and that's why we must learn to pray to God also with 'thanksgiving' because *it counterbalances all the bad news we are subjected to* (internally and externally). ***Paul meditated on the truth to prepare his mind and heart for the bad things he had to go through.*** And we must do likewise. One could even call it 'counting your blessings', as we say today. And doing so brings us back to 'reality' that we really do have much to be thankful for *and* the Lord has not left us. And that is why, even though the Psalmist is in a terrible emotional (and likely physical) state of mind here, he now beginning to remember the 'days of old' and all of God's wondrous works. And he will also begin to praise God for those 'wondrous works' as well. And this is truly what having faith in, and trusting in, our Heavenly Father (and His Son, Jesus Christ) is all about...

Psalm 77

13 Thy way, O God, is **in the sanctuary**: *who is so great a God as our God?*

First off, the first and last time the word 'God' is used here is '**Elohiym**' (#430), which means *the Supreme God*, who is our *Creator*. But, the second time 'God' is used here it's '**El**' (#410), which means the *Almighty God* who is *Omnipotent*; it shows His strength, power and might. So, the Psalmist is using to 'titles' for our Heavenly Father (Yehovah = YHVH) which both express His power in being the Supreme God as well as our Creator. Next, notice that the Psalmist is finally declaring that what he needs is to be 'in the Sanctuary' with God, which means to be *spiritually* close to Him. Only when we are *spiritually* close to Him can we find *true* peace of mind and happiness (and even contentment, as Paul did) with the difficult times we're going through. The word '**way**' here means ***a road*** (as trodden); figuratively, a ***course of life*** or ***mode of action*** (#1870). It is *the way* we think, *the way* we act, *the way* we speak and even *the way* we desire. But, importantly, God's 'way' is the only way to *eternal* life (Prov 6:23). Thus, God's Word (Jesus Christ) teaches us how to walk in 'the way' of truth (Ps 119:30), in 'the way' of understanding truth (Prov 9:6), in 'the way' of peace (**Rom 3:17**), in 'the way' of righteousness' (Prov 12:28, Prov 15:9). And that's why Jesus Christ said: ***I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father; but by me*** (John 14:6). Jesus truly 'walked' in 'the way' of God

His *entire* life, for He *never* sinned (Heb 4:15, 2 Cor 5:21, 1 Peter 2:22, 1 John 3:5). Therefore, He's perfectly able to help us learn how to do so as well (Heb 2:14-18). Prov 10:29 also tells us that '*the way*' of the LORD is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity. And Ps 25:8 also tells us that *the Lord will teach sinners in 'the way'*, which means those who are willing to humble themselves, repent for their sins and learn 'His way'. God will help us **if** we're *sincerely* trying. And Ps 119:1 tells us that those who walk in the Law of the Lord (strive to live their life abiding by His Word) are *undefiled* in 'the way' of the Lord.

But, contrary to God's 'way' (which leads to eternal life) is the 'way of the world'. And God allows us to choose what 'way' we want to live. As He said in Jer 21:8: *Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I set before you 'the way' of life, and 'the way' of death.* In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses also laid it out pretty clearly...

*19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that **I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing:** therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:
20 That thou mayest **love the LORD thy God**, and that thou mayest **obey his voice**, and that thou mayest **cleave unto him**: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.*
Deut 30:19-20

The only 'way' to *eternal* life is to follow God's Word, the best we can, *from the heart*. For, if we choose to follow 'the way' of the world (1 John 2:15-17) then we make ourselves God's enemy (James 4:4, Rom 8:5-9). *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord* (Rom 6:23). And, even though 'the way' to eternal life is laid out quite clearly in God's Word, far too many people still choose the way of death...

*12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.
13 **Enter ye in at the strait gate:** for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:
14 Because **strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.***
Matt 7:12-14

So, the 'path to hell' (spiritual death) is 'wide' (because many walk on it) and the path to eternal life is narrow (because few walk on it)! And, the reason that 'few' find the straight gate, which is 'the way' of God (Jesus Christ), is because it takes **disciplining** our heart and mind to **control** our emotions, lusts and pride (etc.). And many people simply don't want to do that (2 Thess 2:10-12, 2 Pt 10-15). But, *they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections* [emotions

#3804] *and lusts*. And God's Word teaches us how to do that. Paul did so in Phil 4 and this beautiful Psalm is also teaching us how to do that. But it also shows us that feeling bad for ourselves, as this Psalmist did in the beginning of this Psalm, is not uncommon. However, just because it's not uncommon *doesn't mean we should do it*. We should *not* stay in a pity party; we've got to *discipline* our feelings and emotions (as well as other inclinations of the flesh) and remember God's Word **if** we want to overcome our sinful (carnal) nature. For only when we are 'in the Sanctuary' can we find peace of mind. And, essentially, this means being 'in' the Word of God. As Jesus said...

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

*5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: **He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit**: for without me ye can do nothing.*

*6 **If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered**; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

John 15:4-10

This truly is a beautiful summary of what being 'in the Sanctuary' is all about. Dwelling, *spiritually*, on God's Word **is** 'abiding in Him'. And that's *exactly* what this Psalmist is beginning to do! And, when we do so, He will 'dwell in us' by giving us His Holy Spirit, which helps us to understand His Word even better, as well as learn how to obey it (John 6:63). So, when the Psalmist says (in Ps 7:13) that God's 'way' is 'in the Sanctuary', he's saying that the *only* way to eternal life is to be close, *spiritually*, to our Heavenly Father. Back in the days of this Psalmist, they went to the Sanctuary because that's where they were to worship, simply because they still had to offer animal sacrifices back then. But, now that Jesus Christ has fulfilled all the blood sacrifices, for all times (Col 2:14, Eph 2:15, Heb 10:10) ***we don't need a physical Sanctuary to worship at*** (John 4:23-24) because we are not to offer any blood sacrifices ever again; but rather, to believe in Jesus Christ and follow (serve Him) is being 'in the Sanctuary' now. After all, when the Holy Spirit (and Word of God) is within us, we become part of the Temple of God (1 Cor 3:16-18, 1 Cor 6:15-20, 2 Cor 6:14-18), because our soul 'houses' His Holy Spirit (and His Word). Thus, we become part of the many membered Body of Christ (His government). And we *must* remain 'in the Sanctuary' **if** we want to obtain peace of mind (and blessings) (and eventually *eternal* life) as this Psalmist is seeking so desperately for.

And then the Psalmist ends verse 13 (here in Ps 77) with the phrase: *who is so great a God as our God?* As we learned a few chapters back, the *Companion Bible* notes that the phrase “*whom have I in heaven but thee?*” is ‘ever the cry of God’s saints’ and it’s actually a figure of speech (*Eroesis*, apx 6) that is the asking of a question – not for an answer or for information – but to make a point. And the point is that *there is no one else, but our Heavenly Father*, that can help us like He can. There’s also *no one else* who can give us more peace of mind, or joy in our heart, than He. There are several other Scriptures that praise God in this way albeit with a bit different wording at times: Ex 15:11, Detu 33:26-27, 1 Sam 2:2, 1 Chron 17:20, Ps 35:10, 71:10, 73:25, 86:8, 89:6,8, 113:5.

So, the point is that, there is no one who can help us with our problems like our Heavenly Father. And, only a sincere, and intimate, relationship with our Heavenly Father can make us *truly* happy. There’s *nothing else* (in heaven or on earth) that can fill that void (hole) deep down in our soul except for His Word (truth) and Holy Spirit. And if we want to be close to Him (in the Sanctuary), we must make (and keep) HIM as the desire of our heart, *always!* As Peter said, in 1 Peter 2:1-2, we should *put aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings* and - as newborn babes - *desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby*. We should desire God’s Word (first and foremost in life) and *that’s* what should motivate us to study it, for ourself, each and every day (2 Tim 2:15). And if we do so - diligently and sincerely - He will help us to grow mature, help us to resist all temptations to sin (which *will* come), as well as give us the strength (and understanding) to endure all trials and tribulations (which *will also* come) ...

1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

*2 That he **no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.***

1 Peter 4:1-2

So, we should live our life for God’s will, not to fulfill our lusts. Because lusts only lead us to death (Rom 6:23, James 1:13-15) but making God the ‘desire of our heart’ leads to eternal life. And, that’s also what dispels the negative thoughts, and emotions, out of our heart – as this Psalmist is finally realizing. If we want to overcome depression, we’ve got to think about our Heavenly Father instead of our misery. As it is written...

*3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, **whose mind is stayed on thee:** because he trusteth in thee.*

4 Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:

Isa 26:3-4

So, only when we keep our heart (emotions, feelings, intentions, motivations) and mind (thoughts) on God's Word can we remain 'in the Sanctuary' (or 'in the vine' as Jesus called it in John 15), which means to be close to Him *spiritually* (in our heart and mind). And that's what kicks out the fear, anxieties, worries, and *any other* kind of spiritual languishes...

*22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, **peace**, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,*

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Gal 5:22-26

We'll pick this up in part 3...

AMEN.