

Psalm Chapter 116 - Review

In chapter one-hundred-sixteen, part 1, we learned that the Psalmist was committed to praising the Lord (YHVH) *because* He graciously heard (and answered) the Psalmist's *earnest* prayer. And that teaches us the vital fact that, we *learn to love* by *experiencing* God's love *for us*. And that love is *certainly* felt when the Holy Spirit *takes away* the guilt in our conscience (Heb 9:13-14, 10:2, 22) - *when* we believe in Jesus Christ, *sincerely* repent for our sins, *and* are firmly committed to *changing* them - which leaves us with an *amazing* peace inside our 'inner man'! And *that* fact (that God loved us *first*) **is what** teaches us *how* to truly love others, as John pointed out in 1 John 4:19. For while God's law does teach us how to love others ***in action*** (Lev 19:18, Rom 13:10), it is the Holy Spirit that teaches us how to love people ***from the heart***, especially by getting rid of the negative feelings (such as bitterness, anger and hate), which is what *true* forgiveness really is. Therefore, we also learned that there's more to *true* love than just the *feelings* of affection; for the Scriptures explain that, **if** we truly love the Lord (YHVH) **then** we will also *wholeheartedly* strive to obey Him (*from the heart*). And we also learned that, the more love, mercy and grace the Lord (YHVH) gives us, it just *encourages* us to *continue* to call out to Him when we need help. And truly, that's also what helps our trust in Him to grow! So, as we experience His love, mercy, grace and help – over and over again – our trust, love and commitment to Him just *continues* to grow.

And then we learned *why* the Psalmist spoke of loving the Lord (YHVH) so fervently. For, at one (or more) point in his life, he was having *great* troubles. In fact, he was having *so many* troubles, and afflictions, he felt like he was 'going through hell', and *the pains* he was feeling from his troubles were 'closing in' on him (like a nose around his neck). Yet, the Psalmist knew what to do, for he turned to the one (and only) *true* God (YHVH) and called out for Him to rescue him *now*, which shows the seriousness of his troubles. Therefore, it was *because* the Lord (YHVH) helped the Psalmist (when he was in the most terrible distresses), that he *learned* to love the Lord (YHVH) so very *deeply*. And we also learned that, still today, when we serve our Heavenly Father (Jesus Christ), He *will* indeed help us when we *earnestly* call out to Him for help 'in truth'. And that means there is a stipulation to the Lord (YHVH) helping us. And that stipulation is: we *must* call upon Him 'in truth', which means we must be *earnestly* seeking Him, i.e. not half-heartedly or playing games. As Prov 1:22-33 explains, if we have long refused to hear the Lord's call for us to repent, and *turn away from* our sinful ways, *He won't answer* our calls for help, even though He hears us (Prov 1:24, 28). That is, so long as we *remain* hard hearted and *not* willing to repent *sincerely*. Once we do (earnestly) turn back to Him, He is very gracious, and merciful to help us. And, even if we have previously been rebellious towards Him, we can still call upon Him, but we *must* be sincere about changing from our sinful ways (from the heart), *and* serving the Lord (YHVH), when we call upon Him - which this Psalmist most certainly was!

In part 2 we learned *some of* God's (many) important characteristics, which are that He's *incredibly* (perfectly so) gracious (giving us that which we don't deserve), righteous (He *always* does what's right, Ps 145:17) and He's also loving and compassionate to us who are *earnestly* striving to obey Him (Ps 145:18-20). So, we know the *Supreme* God (Yehovah, who is our Creator) is *eternal* and He *always* does what's right. And, this is also *why* He shows us so much grace and compassion (love) for us. And, *because* the Psalmist had experienced God's grace, compassion, and love (for He helped him when he was oppressed), he was assured that the Lord (YHWH) always 'preserveth' the 'simple', which means our Heavenly Father *always* protects those who *earnestly* seek Him *and* strive to *obey* Him. And the Psalmist even taught us *how* to receive the blessed (internal) *peace* from our Heavenly Father. For he pointed out that, during his hard times (troubles and oppression) he reminded his troubled soul (inner man) to 'settle down' and 'turn back' to *spiritually resting* 'in the Lord' *by trusting in Him!*

And we also learned that, this is something that takes *discipline*. For when hard times (or troubles) come, our first instinct is to worry and/or be afraid. But, if we learn to *control* those carnal emotions (*instead of* letting them to control us), *and* remember God's promises in His Word (and *trust in* them), then we will be able to handle them, and get through them. As 1 Cor 10:11 says, God won't let *anything* happen to us that we cannot handle; He will either give us the strength to get through them, or help us find a way out of (or around) them. And we also looked at Paul's life, for he was an excellent example of how to do this. For, even though he experienced *a lot* of suffering, when he spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he found a way (a right balance) to control his 'inner man' *no matter what* circumstance he was in. And he did that by *meditating on the truth* to *prepare* his mind, and heart, for the bad things he had to go through. Further, his relationship with Jesus Christ also enabled him to endure all things *because* Christ always gave him the strength to overcome bad thoughts about his circumstances – *and these are key points to successfully fighting, in the spiritual war, that we are all in*. For meditating on the truth (God's Word) brings us back to 'reality', i.e. it reminds us of the fact that, we *really do* have much to be thankful for *and* the Lord has *not* left us. And that indeed strengthens our 'inner man' (heart and mind) and gives us *hope to continue on* serving the Lord (YHWH) *with fervor and patience*.

In part 3 we learned some of the ways the Lord (YHWH) had dealt 'bountifully' with the Psalmist. For the Lord (YHWH) delivered him from death (of his flesh life *and* soul), from tears (weeping from depression and fear), and falling (into the hands of those who wanted to kill him *and* to lies and deception). And, while this deliverance was surely physical, it was *also* spiritual. And that teaches us how the Lord (YHWH) will *also* deliver us from the 'falling away' during the great (as in *terrible and widespread*) *apostasy* (2 Thess 2:1-3) **so as long as** we *continue* to love, trust, hear and obey the Lord (YHWH) *wholeheartedly* (just as the Psalmist did). And then we saw the Psalmist declare his *commitment* to live the rest of his life *in accordance to God's will*, even though he formerly struggled with depression, and fear, and felt as though there was no one he could trust in. Yet, *because* he *comforted himself* in the *fact* that the Lord (YHWH) **is** gracious,

merciful (compassionate and loving) and righteous, the Lord (YHVH) helped him out of his troubles.

And that's *why* the Psalmist said he 'believed' and *assuredly* proclaimed (have I spoken) that he would 'walk before the Lord in the land of the living'. So, even though his emotions (of fear and depression) *caused him* to become *so* stressed out he didn't trust anyone, he then 'came to his senses' (as verse 7 spoke of) and remembered God had *not* left him, which is *why* he was then assured (as vs 9 said) he would not die and committed himself to living the rest of his life for God's will and *not* his carnal inclinations. And we also learned that Paul quoted from verse 10 (in this Psalm 116) to point out that, the *same* 'spirit of faith' that was in the Psalmist of Psalm 116, was also in him (i.e. Paul)! Therefore, we know that, while the Psalmist was assured he would 'live to see another day' (i.e. *walk before the Lord in the 'land of the living'*), he was also declaring that he *earnestly* believed in both the resurrection of the Messiah, Jesus Christ AND the *future* resurrection (of those who faithfully serve the Lord, YHVH) that *will* come when Jesus Christ returns. And truly, this is the same 'spirit of faith' we *also* should have today.

In part 4 we saw the Psalmist wonder how he could *possibly* thank our Heavenly Father for all He'd done for him. And truly, this is likely a question we've all had! And we learned that, while there's *nothing physically* that we can give our Heavenly Father (for He owns everything), the one thing He sincerely wants from us is to 'take up' (lift up) the 'cup of salvation' through ***believing in God's Savior, Jesus Christ!*** And *true* belief *will* impact *the way* we live our life. For, when we *truly* believe in the Messiah (Jesus Christ) we will *earnestly* strive (from the heart) to learn, *and obey*, God's Word, repent *sincerely* when we see our sins, and strive *hard* to stop sinning (*from the heart*, to our words, *and* actions). And it is *this process* of faith in God's Word, impacting the way we live (edifying how we think, desire and behave), that ***is*** 'taking up the cup of salvation', which pleases our Heavenly Father ever *so much*! And we also learned the Psalmist promised to 'call upon the name of the Lord', which means to call upon the one, *and only*, ***true*** (and *Living*) God, Yehovah... which means we will not 'call upon' false gods, or idols for help – *nor* give them any praise, worship or glory! Thus, to truly 'call upon' God's 'name' means you seek Him (and Him *only*) for help, guidance and protection (even blessings) and strive to learn His Word and obey Him, *from the heart*. So, in essence, 'calling upon' the name of the Lord (YHVH) means having an *intimate* relationship with Him, i.e. worshiping Him 'in spirit and in truth' (John 4:23-24).

And then we also read of how the Psalmist promised to pay his 'vows' to the Lord (YHVH) *and* to do so *publicly*, in the presence of all His people (the congregation). And we learned this means that, he promised to be *just as faithful* to perform his promises to God, as the Lord (YHVH) *is faithful to keep His Word* (promises) to those who *obey* Him. And back in those days people often made 'vows' to give God a specific blood sacrifices (typically a 'thanksgiving' offering), as the Psalmist of Psalm 66 (vs 13) did. However, David also made 'vows' to *publicly* praise the

Lord (YHVH) before the congregation (Ps 22:25, 56:12, Ps 61:8), which he certainly fulfilled, because we still have many of his Psalms to study today. So, while the Psalmist didn't specify *what* 'vows' he had made to the Lord (YHVH), we can be assured he kept them! Yet, we also learned that today we should be careful of making promises to God (specially to stop a sin we're struggling with) because Jesus told us it's better not to do so. Rather, we should simply be *firmly* committed to continue to love, trust, and obey the Lord (YHVH), *earnestly*. And, when we do have unwavering commitment to love, trust and obey Him (earnestly) – for the rest of our life – that *will* impact that way we interact with, and communicate with, other people. So, our *firm* commitment will be 'in front of all His people' simply because *they will be able to see* our earnest faith (and commitment) to the Lord via our good words and works. As Jesus said, *Let your light so shine before men, **that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven*** (Matt 5:16).

And then the Psalmist made the profound statement that, "*Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints*". So, our Heavenly Father is *not* 'careless' about the lives of those who *faithfully* serve Him; rather He's *very* diligent to take care of us. And, therefore, He's also very diligent (careful) about *when* He allows us to die - for letting one of His faithful servants depart from this flesh body means He cannot use them in this fleshly (carnal) dimension anymore. Yet, we also learned that, what's *also* very precious (valuable) to Him, is when His faithful servants are *willing* to die *for His sake*, i.e. to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the death of His 'saints' (those who fervently serve Him) is *indeed* precious in God's eyes (sight) because they are *willing to die for Him*. And, as Jesus said, there's *no greater love* than that (John 15:13). So truly, if we really do love the Lord, we *must* be willing to die for His sake. While we may never have to, we must be *that* devoted to Him! So, we must have the *mindset* that our devotion, and commitment to Him, is *so firm*, we won't *ever* renounce our faith in God, **or** Jesus Christ (Matt 16:24-27), *even if we are killed for it*. After all, Jesus warned us that we would have to endure (at least) *some* persecutions for serving Him (John 15:20); yet, He also told us the rewards for enduring those persecutions (for His sake) will be *awesome* (Mth 5:10-12). So again (to reiterate), not only does God consider the death of His 'saints' (devoted servants) very precious (valuable) in His eyes (sight), He also considers their *willingness* to actually *die for Him* also very precious (valuable). And that's really *why* the Psalmist brought out this point here, for he was essentially saying that he truly was *so devoted* to the Lord (YHVH) that he *would* be willing to die for His sake.

In part 5 we learned how the Psalmist *twice* declared he was the Lord's (YHVH's) servant; and he did this for *emphasis*, to *stress* the point that he *only* served the *true* (Living) God, Yehovah (YHVH). And he also declared that he was the 'son of thine handmaid' to point out that he was *born into* the relationship of serving the Lord (YHVH) *because* his parents raised him to fear (revere) and serve (obey) the Lord (YHVH). Yet, despite that, it took some time for him to learn how to *really* serve the Lord (YHVH) *from the heart*. For, while his parents taught him how to do

so *in action*, it takes living life for a while (and gaining experience) to *really* understand what sin **is** and *how to control* the sinful part of us (our carnal mind, Rom 8:5-8). And then the Psalmist promised to offer the ‘sacrifice’ of thanksgiving, which showed us just *what* ‘vows’ the Psalmist made to the Lord, back in verse 13. So, the Psalmist promised to give a ‘sacrifice’ (animal) to the priests to slaughter as a ‘thanksgiving sacrifice’ unto the Lord (YHVH). As Lev 7 explains, this was offered with a ‘peace’ offering and it was always something the priesthood had to offer (at behest of the offeror) according to God’s Laws back then. Yet we also learned that today, since Jesus Christ has *already come* and fulfilled **all** blood sacrifices (once and for all) we are **not ever** to offer animal sacrifices (Heb 10:10, etc.); for what He truly wants are the *spiritual* sacrifices (1 Peter 2:4-6, Ps 141:2), such as: thanksgiving (Ps 50:7-15, 107:11, 116:17, Jonah 2:9, Amos 4:5), praise (Ps 54:6, Ps 141:2, Jer 17:26, 33:11), joy (Ps 27:6) righteousness (Deut 33:19, Ps 4:5, Heb 13:15), controlling our body (Rom 12:1-3) including our mouth (Ps 119:108).

And then the Psalmist *again* promised to ***call upon the name of the LORD***. And, as we learned in our last study (of this great Psalm 116), this simply means to call upon the one, *and only*, **true** (and *Living*) God, Yehovah (and *not* false gods, or idols) for help, guidance and protection (even blessings) and strive to learn His Word and obey Him, *from the heart*. So, in essence, ‘calling upon’ the name of the Lord (YHVH) means having an *intimate* relationship with Him, i.e. worshiping Him ‘in spirit and in truth’ (John 4:23-24). So clearly, the Psalmist *fully* understood that our Heavenly Father wants our *true* ‘inward worship’ - not merely *fake* ‘outward’ worship. But, when he wrote this Psalm, the Messiah (Jesus Christ) had *not yet* come to die for our sins (which fulfilled the blood sacrifices, *once and for all*, Heb 10:10; Col 2:14; Eph 2:15). So, he *still had* to offer blood sacrifices to the Lord (YHVH); but his understanding of *what they symbolized* reveals that he *really was* worshiping the Lord (YHVH) with his *whole heart* and trying to *earnestly* obey Him, which is why he proclaimed (twice) he was the Lord’s (YHVH’s) servant.

And then the Psalmist again promised to publicly pay his vows to the Lord (YHVH), which we learned means he was determined to be *just as faithful* to perform his promises to God, as the Lord (YHVH) *is faithful to keep* His Word (promises) to those who *obey* Him. And while, back then, making ‘vows’ to God was a common thing, Jesus Christ warned it’s better that we not (i.e. we really *should not*) make oaths (vows) to God (or anyone else) because, our word should be *so good* (reliable) that we don’t *need* to ‘swear’ we’ll do something (Matt 5:33-37). So, today our ‘vows’ to God should simply be our total (firm) *commitment to* continue to love, trust, *and obey* Him, *earnestly*. And, our *firm* commitment to serving the Lord (YHVH) will be ‘in front of all His people’ simply because *they will be able to see* our earnest faith (and commitment) to the Lord via our good words and works. And then we saw the Psalmist call all people to ‘join him’ in worshiping the Lord (YHVH) in the outer courts of His Temple. But, of course, today we are supposed to worship the Lord (YHVH) *wherever* we are ‘*in spirit and in truth*’ (John 4:23-24). And this means we should not only study God’s Word (earnestly, diligently, sincerely, and with

understanding) but strive to obey His Word (and Holy Spirit) and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ whenever the opportunities arise (Eph 5:15-16; Col 4:5-6). And then the Psalmist ended this precious Psalm with the phrase ‘Praise Ye the Lord’ (which is ‘hallelujah’ in the Hebrew), which means to ‘praise the Lord’ for His great *salvation*! Indeed, this truly is something we should *continue* to do, throughout the *rest of our life* (just as the Psalmist promised to do). Not merely by singing songs to Him but (more importantly) by sharing the *true* Gospel of Jesus Christ (not a perverted form of it) with all those we come in contact with, be it by our good words and works, planting seeds of truth and/or using our God given gifts effectively...

15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

*16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices **God is well pleased**.*
Heb 13:15-16

*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**.*

Phil 4:8

Praise Ye the Lord – *Hallelujah*!

AMEN.