

Part 5 – God’s Cleansing Ways

In part 4 we learned that God’s written Word is the *complete truth* and thus it converts us from sin because it *teaches us the truth* – it teaches us what sin is and how to do what’s right (from the heart), which is what we need *to live eternally*. Therefore, it also makes the simple (the foolish who are easily seduced into sinning) wise in that it teaches us how not sin and how to do what’s right, from the heart. We also learned that His statutes (laws pertaining to governmental administration) are right (righteous) and when they are obeyed, they do ‘rejoice the heart’ of the people because justice is implemented and peace is the result. We also learned that God’s commandments are pure – they are totally without fault and give us the best ‘advice’ we’ll ever find. They indeed ‘enlighten’ our eyes by *giving us the truth* that we need to live eternally, as well as to be happy, healthy and prosperous even while living in these flesh bodies. And we also learned that God’s Laws have not been ‘done away with’ when Jesus Christ shed His blood for our sins. Only the blood sacrifices were ‘done away’ with because Jesus Christ *fulfilled* them once and for all (Mth 5, Heb 10:10). As such, the Holy Spirit is given to us when we believing in Jesus’ atoning blood (and repent for our sin) and that’s what teaches us how to do what’s right, when we study His Word sincerely. Truly, God’s Word (and Laws) work together with the Holy Spirit to create a ‘new man’ within our soul who *learns how* to do what’s right, *wants* to do what’s right and gives us the internal strength *to actually do* what is right. And this is (in a ‘nutshell’) how Jesus Christ ‘saves’ us from our sins. We’ll now move on in this great 19th chapter of Psalms to continue to learn about the blessings of God’s written Word...

Psalm 19

9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

First off, we should understand what this word ‘fear’ means. It is *yir’ah* (#3374) in the Hebrew and does mean ‘fear’ as we normally think of it but it also means to ‘reverence’. And this is a key point in life. We must both ‘fear’ God and ‘revere’ Him. We are to ‘fear’ Him, but only so that we *fear to do evil* because, He simply doesn’t want us to wicked things. Therefore, He doesn’t want us to be afraid to come near to Him. After all, He *wants* to have a personal and intimate (spiritual) relationship with us. He truly wants our sincere love, respect (reverence) and honor. So, we should ‘fear’ God insomuch that we don’t wickedly depart from Him (do evil) but we should ‘revere’ Him by ‘keeping’ (guard and protect and obey) His Words in our heart and mind (Ps 18:21). The Proverbs explains this in such a beautifully concise way when it says: *By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil* (Prov 16:6). When people fear the negative consequences that come from disobeying God’s Word (the cursings) then they will depart from doing evil. But if they don’t believe in God, or don’t think anything ‘bad’ will come from disobeying Him, then they won’t fear to do evil. As such, there is no evil they won’t stoop too and that’s dangerous for our soul (1 Tim 4:1-2). This Proverb also gives us great insight into how God cleanses us spiritually when it says that *mercy and truth iniquity is purged*. Indeed, when we *sincerely* repent for our sins, God does forgive us (so long as we believe in the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who paid for our sins); but we must *also* work to change

our inner many (from the heart) by studying His Word to learn truth so that we not only *want* to stop sinning (from the heart) but also *learn how to stop sinning*. And this is why God's Word (and laws) are so important – they teach us the difference between right (Light, truth, righteousness) and wrong (Darkness, lies and sinning). As Prov 1:7 also profoundly states: *the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction*. When we fear God Almighty (fear to do what's wrong and revere Him) we do believe in Him, and will seek to learn how to do what's right *according to His righteousness*, which is written in His Word. But, if we don't fear or revere Him (believe in Him or respect His Word) enough to study His Word, *and learn from it*, then we will foolishly despise His wisdom and instruction, which He has so graciously given to us through His Written Word (and in the heavens themselves). So, this point is really quite pivotal to life. As Heb 11:6 so succinctly says: ***without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.***

And the Word of God is full of many other Scriptures that explain why the 'fear of the Lord is clean'. Now, the word 'clean' here is *tahowr* or *tahor* (#2889) and it means ***pure*** (in a physical, chemical, ceremonial or moral sense). It's also been translated as fair and pure. It comes from *taher* (#2891), a primitive root that means: ***to be bright***; i.e. (by implication) ***to be pure*** (physical sound, clear, unadulterated; Levitically, ***uncontaminated; morally, innocent or holy***). In other words, 'fearing' God (fearing and respecting Him) is what cleans our soul. Why? Simply because *we'll listen to Him* (His Words and Holy Spirit) and *believe what He says*. And *that* is what changes our sinful soul into a righteous soul. And it's not that we'll ever be without sin while in these flesh bodies; but Jesus Christ shed His precious (sinless) blood so we have the right be forgiven from God when we do fall short and repent sincerely (daily if need be). In Matt 18:21-22, Peter asked Jesus how many times we should forgive others when they sin against us and Jesus told Him 'seventy times seven', which is a figure of speech that basically means it does not matter how many times someone sins against us, we should forgive them. While this doesn't mean we need to verbally tell them we forgive them, or foolishly trust them, it does mean we should forgive them *in our heart* (Mth 18:35) *so we don't harbor bitterness* in our heart because *that* corrupts our heart (Heb 12:15, Eph 4:31) and leads us to sin too. So, if Jesus told us to forgive others without limit, so too does our Heavenly Father... IF we are truly sincere. And if we really are sincere, we will work to stop sinning against Him. So long as we are sincerely trying to change who we are (from the 'bottom' of our heart) then He will continue to forgive us and help us change from the 'inside out'. So, 'fearing' God indeed cleans our soul. But this does not come without work on our part. Check out what the book of Proverbs (again) teaches us...

*1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;
2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;
3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;
4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;
5 **Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.***
Prov 2:1-5

This Proverbs explains how hard we must work to glean wisdom and understanding from God's Word. We must seek truth, wisdom and understanding from God's Word as though we were looking for gold, silver or other 'hidden treasures' from the earth. This tells us too that God's Word is much more important than any earthly treasures, which is why Proverbs goes on to say that *wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it* (Prov 8:11). This is why the righteous king, Hezekiah, said: *I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold* (Ps 119:127). Hezekiah learned that obeying God's commandments brings blessings from Him and (more importantly) peace of mind that cannot be gotten from any other way except when our soul is 'at peace' with our Heavenly Father. And a few verses later in Proverbs 8 (vs 13) we're told exactly what 'fearing' God is: ***The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.*** Though we should not keep the emotion of hate fermenting in our soul (as Ps 37 says) we should hate evil in such a way that we find it disgusting and we should strive hard not to partake in it, nor allow it to grow in any area of our life that we have authority over. As we learned back in Ps 11:5, God *hates* the wicked and those who love violence. So, *hate in itself is not bad* it is what we do with hate in our heart that matters. **God's hatred is righteous because He does not allow it to corrupt, or pervert, His soul and we should learn to be like Him.**

Isa 11:1-5 also tells us that a key characteristic of Jesus Christ is that He has *quick understanding in the fear of the LORD* (vs 3) and this is what allows Him to perfectly judge all things (without partiality, vs 3-4). So again, 'fearing God' is pivotal part of loving and serving Him. It was a key characteristic of Jesus Christ. *It's thus a pivotal part of obtaining eternal life.* And the apostles also had 'fear of the Lord' when the Church was growing (Acts 9:31) and that's because the Holy Spirit was given to them, and allowed them to understand God's Word with clarity – something many had not been able to do thanks to the corrupted 'traditions of man' that the crooked religious leaders of their day had been teaching (Mth 15:1-9, Mk 7:1-13). There truly is nothing new under the sun (Ecc 1:9). Many Churches today have stopped teaching people to fear and revere our Heavenly Father, which is why there is indeed a great spiritual famine, just as God had warned us would happen in Amos 8:11.

We could also look at many more Scriptures in the Proverbs to see all that the 'fear of the Lord' does for us: Prov 10:27, 14:26-27, Prov 15:16, Prov 15:33, Prov 19:23, Prov 22:4, Prov 23:17-18 all give us great promises for having 'fear' of the Lord (YHVH). But we also have historical proof from the Word of God that shows how, when Israel (or Judah) actually had good kings who tried hard to obey God's Word then people learned to 'fear God' because they *feared to do evil* because God's Laws were being obeyed by the government. Check out one example...

*1 And Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead, and strengthened himself against Israel.
2 And he placed forces in all the fenced cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim, which Asa his father had taken.
3 And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim;*

4 But sought to the LORD God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel.

5 Therefore the LORD stablished the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents; and he had riches and honour in abundance.

6 And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the LORD: moreover he took away the high places and groves out of Judah.

7 Also in the third year of his reign he sent to his princes, even to Ben-hail, and to Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and to Nethaneel, and to Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah.

8 And with them he sent Levites, even Shemaiah, and Nethaniah, and Zebadiah, and Asahel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehonathan, and Adonijah, and Tobijah, and Tob-adonijah, Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, priests.

9 And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the LORD with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people.

10 And the fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat.

2 Chron 17:1-10

First off, to understand the history being spoken of here, we must remember that, during the reign of Rehoboam (Solomon's son) Israel rebelled against the king and the nation was divided into two nations from that time forward (1 Kings 11). They will only be truly joined back together when Jesus Christ returns (Ezek 37, the 'two sticks' prophesy). And for Israel's entire history, they never had a king that sought to obey God's Laws and therefore they continued to sin greatly (worse and worse) and that's why they were taken away captive over a hundred years before Judah was. Jeremiah 3 explains this pretty well as do the histories in the Kings and Chronicles and some of the other prophet's books. So, in the account we just read, king *Jehoshaphat* was the king over the *southern* kingdom of Judah, which consisted mostly of people from the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi with a few of the other tribes too; most people in the northern kingdom of Israel who wanted to remain loyal to YHVH moved to the southern Kingdom of Judah after Israel split off because, Judah was (for the most part) much more loyal to Him than Israel was. As such, nearly all the Levites moved from the northern kingdom of Israel (which was very corrupted) to the southern kingdom of Judah so they could worship God without persecution. And while Judah did have bad kings too, they actually (unlike Israel) had some good kings too. King Jehoshaphat was one such king and while he was not without fault (i.e. he kept helping Israel in battle, which God did not like because Israel was very wicked at that time) he did do many good things, as these Scriptures tell us. Verse 6 tells us *he took away the high places and groves out of Judah*. This means he was trying to get the false gods and idolatry out of his nation. Verses 7-10 then tell us he sent people (Levites and Priests) through the kingdom to teach the people how to obey God's Word! This had such a profound impact upon the nation that even the heathen (non-Israelite) nations 'feared God' because they dared not make war with the southern kingdom of Judah due to God's blessing them for their efforts to learn His Word and obey it. This is but one example of how 'fearing God' – both in the sense of fearing Him literally and also in the sense of respecting Him – causes great blessings to come to us. Because the key point is that: it's *only* when we fear to do evil that we'll learn His ways and

strive sincerely to obey Him. This point in Judah's history is a prime example of this. 2 Chron 19:4-11 also tells us how king Jehoshaphat even tried to bring people from Israel back to YHWH when he had conquered some of their territory and he did so by setting judges all over the areas and commanding them to judge rightly and to teach God's righteous laws to the people. So, he really did a good job of trying to get the nation back on the 'right track' to worshipping the one and only true God, YHWH.

And these are still not all the places that speak of the cleansing effect that fearing God has upon us. Psalms 34:10 also declares that *they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing*. That's because when we fear God, we will strive hard to *obey Him* and that is what causes Him to bless us, both physically and spiritually. Further, shortly before David's death, he gave his son, Solomon, much sound advice because he was about to take the throne after David died. And David warned him that *he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God* (2 Sam 23:3). This is because truly, those who have authority to rule over others are governing the people for God Himself – they are therefore His representatives on earth (whether they realize it or not). That's why, in the first chapter of Deuteronomy, Moses admonishes the judges of his time to judge rightly and *not to be partial* (i.e. don't pervert judgment). They were to hear and judge all cases according to God's Laws - even the poor people's cases were to be given the *same* justice as the wealthy and influential people. They were not to pervert judgments for any reason whatsoever (bribes, threats, ect.) because *'the judgment is God's'* (Deut 1:16-17). In other words, there was (and still is) to be ONE Law (i.e. God's laws) for ALL people. So judges, like kings - or any rulers of the earth - are truly supposed to be ruling for God (Rom 13). They are thus *supposed* to be HIS *servants* and obey His Word. But, *if they don't fear God, they won't do this...* which is quite obvious when you look at the world today.

But we must remember, the Word of God (Ps 37 in particular) tells us not to get emotionally overloaded with anger over the fact that our governments (yea, the world) have become incorrigibly corrupt, because our Heavenly Father see's it and *will* punish the wicked for their sins. But, we must wait for Him to 'take vengeance' for all wrongs done on earth and not allow ourselves to 'do evil' just because others appear to 'get away with it'. While this does not mean we should be a 'walking mat' for anyone (we have a right to defend ourselves), it simply means we shouldn't try to take vengeance for ourselves nor try to overthrow our government. We must obey God's Word and His Word says to obey the government so long as they are not trying to get us to disobey Him (Rom 13). And when they do try to get us to disobey Him (which they do at times) it is our moral obligation to Jesus Christ to simply *not comply with them*. We don't need to 'get up in arms' or have a fit about it. Simply *don't comply*. Always remember our examples.

For one example, look at the way Daniel handled himself when the king Darius made a law that *no one could pray to anyone else but him* (Dan 6) or else they would be thrown into a pit with a bunch of hungry lions. Did this stop Daniel from praying to the one and only true God? Nope, he did so *and he did not do it secretly*. So, of course, he was pitched into a den of lions. Now, Daniel knew about the 'law' that the king had made. *But he refused to let it detour him from worshipping the one and only true God*. And because it was not yet time for Daniel to die, God

literally held the lions back from eating him. What's really great about that historical account is that the jerks who set Daniel up to get killed were then thrown into the den of lions because the king (who loved Daniel) realized they had fooled him into making a law (they played on his pride) that would hurt one of his most beloved servants. Another great example to always remember is in Daniel chapter 3, where we're told the king of Babylon made an image of gold and commanded everyone to bow down to it when they heard special music being played. However, three of the king's servants who were of the tribe of Judah - Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego – refused to do so *because they would not worship anything or anyone other than their God* – who is the *one and only true* God. Listen to what they said when the king angrily demanded they bow down and worship the image of gold he made...

*14 Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, **Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?***

15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

*17 **If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.***

*18 **But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.***

Dan 3:14-18

The king gave Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego a 'second chance' to change their minds. What did they do? Did they 'cave' to the pressure? Did they try to fight back? Did they try to cause an insurrection? Did they even get emotional (scared) about facing death? **No, they stood firm in their faith**. And they also pointed out that IF God wanted to, *He was able to save them*. BUT, IF He did not want to, they were willing to die because *there was no way in hell* they were going to worship anyone or anything other than the one true God, YHVH – even at the threat of the death punishment. As such...

20 And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

*22 Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and **the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.** [now, that is justice!]*

23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

25 He answered and said, Lo, **I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.**

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, **came forth of the midst of the fire.**

27 And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

Dan 3:20-27

Because these three faithful servants of the Most High God *did not comply* to the king's 'law', they were thrown into a fiery furnace that was seven times hotter than normal. It was so hot it *instantly* killed the men who pitched them into the fire yet, it did nothing whatsoever do Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego... they didn't even smell like fire after being in the fiery furnace! The king Nebuchadnezzar had asked what God would be able to save them from 'his hand' and *he found out*. But even if God had not wanted to save these three men (if it had been 'their time to die') they were ok with that. ***They would rather die and be loyal to God Almighty (YHVH) than to sell out their morals just to save their flesh body, which is a very temporal thing.*** So, while we know that most people today (especially those who rule over us) do not 'fear God', this should not change our loyalty to our Heavenly Father or our Savior, Jesus Christ. We should learn from Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego's examples and learn to bravely 'not comply' when our governments, bosses, or anyone else tries to get us to sin against our God (YHVH, Jesus Christ). To reiterate, we do have a right to self-defense. When someone attacks us on the street or comes into our homes and tries to harm us, we have a right to defend ourselves. But if anyone tries to coerce us to sin against God – no matter how much 'authority' they have – ***we are duty bound to God and Jesus Christ not to comply.*** Again, that doesn't mean we rebel against our government or boss or whoever. We simply *do not obey them* because *they have no right to try and get us to sin against our Heavenly Father*. Understanding this (and practicing it) ***now*** will help us have the conviction, determination and courage to stand against Satan and his wicked agenda when he is on earth trying (like the Persian and Babylonian kings) to get us to stop praying to, and worshiping the true God Almighty (Jesus Christ)... *and worship him instead* (2 Thess 2, Rev 12, Dan 9:27, Mth 24:15, Mk 13:14).

God promises to bless us only **if** we remain faithful and obedient *to Him*, despite how we are maltreated in life. In other words, 'two wrongs don't make a right'. God expects us to do what is right (obey His Word) even if everyone else on earth is not, because the only way we'll be allowed to rule with Jesus Christ (and obtain eternal life in the first resurrection) is *if we remain faithful to Him*. That means we can't sin just because 'others do it' nor can we bow to peer pressure or even the threat of death. After all, sin harms our soul... so why would we want to just because others do? Or why would we want to sin just to save our temporary flesh life – we all

have to die sometime – wouldn't you rather keep your morals and integrity than to cave in cowardice and sin against the Almighty God? In Matt 16:26 Jesus said: *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* And in Mark 8:38 He went on to say: *Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.* To someone who as truly put on the 'new man' (through Jesus Christ) willingly sinning to save your flesh body doesn't make any sense. After you have sincerely repented for your sins, you don't want to go back to that filthy way of life! And again, we're all going to die sometime. ***It's far better to remain faithful to Jesus Christ and loose your flesh life than to lose your soul in the lake of fire because you were too much a coward to take a stand for Jesus Christ and remain loyal to the one and only true God Almighty (YHVH).*** As Jesus also said: *fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell* (Matt 10:28).

Of course, it's not only the Old Testament that tells us we should 'fear God'. 2 Cor 7:1 also tells us this when saying: *Having therefore these promises [of eternal life, peace from the Holy Spirit and getting to rule with Christ when He returns], dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* Paul points out that we should clean our self from all filthiness of flesh (actions) as well as in our heart and mind (spirit). And how to we 'perfect' our 'holiness'? Yes, by fearing God. We *must* fear His chastisement and punishments enough to keep us from doing evil. But we must also love and respect Him enough to *continue* to do what's right, even when the temptations to sin is great or our job, prestige or our life is threatened. That's why it's important to keep His Words in your heart and mind daily so we can remember them temptations and/or threats come around. As Ps 119:11 says: *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.* And Paul continues to give us sound advice based upon the 'fear of the Lord'. Check out what he wrote to the Ephesians...

6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

9(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth:)

10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

13 But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

18 *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but **be filled with the Spirit**;*
 19 *Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;*
 20 *Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;*
 21 *Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*
 Eph 5:6-21

Paul cautions us not to allow ourselves to be deceived with ‘vain words’, which means lies hidden as truth (2 Cor 11:13-15). He also tells us not to be partakers with those who walk in darkness – those who have not truly accepted Jesus Christ – who don’t care about His Word and are not sincerely trying to obey it. And while this does not mean we can’t go around ‘sinners’ it means we shouldn’t be close friends with people like this because they’ll lead us astray from the truth. As the old saying goes ‘birds of a feather flock together’ – *you end up being like the people you spend the most time with*. And that’s *exactly* why it’s important to spend time in God’s Word; **if** we want to be like Him (1 Pt 1:13-16, Lev 20:7) then we should spend time with Him and we do that by studying His Word, thinking about it and praying to Him throughout the day. But notice what Paul says in verse 21: we are to submit ourselves to each other in the fear of God. The word ‘submitting’ here is a Greek word that means *to subordinate* or *to obey* (#5293). Paul is referring to the Church system he set up there and the purpose of submitting to those who had ‘rule over them’ *in the Church* was simply *so the Word of God could be taught with discipline*. It was *for the betterment* (edification) *of their souls* – not to make the leaders rich or give them price and prestige... which is what many Churches have become today. So, it is good to submit to those who truly teach God’s word simply because of the truth they feed us spiritually. However, this should never be replaced with taking time ourselves to study God’s Word because we must develop and one-on-one relationship with our Heavenly Father through Jesus Christ who is the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. The point is, having the ‘fear of God’ also means giving due respect to those who the Holy Spirit has given gifts of teaching and other ministries of the Spirit (as outlined in 2 Cor 12). We shouldn’t disrespect one another’s gifts. We should honor them and allow them to serve God with the gift(s) He has given them and we should also strive to use our gift to honor God and teach others to ‘fear Him’ so they too can find salvation through Jesus Christ.

Now, the latter part of Psalms 19:9 also tells us that: *the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether*. The ‘**judgments**’ referred to here is the Hebrew word *mishpat* (#4941), which means: **a verdict** (favorable or unfavorable) **pronounced judicially**, especially a sentence or formal decree (human or [participant’s] divine law, individual or collective), including the act, the place, the suit, the crime, and the penalty; abstractly, justice, including a participant’s right or privilege (statutory or customary), or even a style. It comes from the prime root *shaphat* (#8199), which means: **to judge**, i.e. **pronounce sentence** (for or against); by implication, **to vindicate or punish**; by extension, **to govern**; passively, **to litigate** (literally or figuratively). So, the judgments here is definitely referring to the courts but can also refer to those in the Church who have been given the duty to keep order in the Church. In 1 Cor 6:1-7 Paul chastises the Church in

Corinth for taking other Christians to court in the heathens ‘legal system’. He points out that it’s ridiculous that those in the Church cannot work out their problems amongst themselves. He also says that it would be better to suffer wrong from Church member than for both parties to have to pay lawyers in the heathen’s court system just to find supposed ‘justice’. As we all know, many courts are not righteous and true justice is never seen. So, amongst fellow Christians it’s better to work things out between yourself. And if you cannot, it is even better to ‘suffer wrong’ by a Christian than to take them to a heathen court. Why? Because the Holy Spirit will correct the one who did wrong to their Christian brother or sister – in His own way and time. And *we should trust that*. Perhaps we may even be at fault too. Now, this admonishment does not apply to people who are not Christians. If someone outside the Christian faith has done you wrong (and you have the money to do so) it’s perfectly fine to take them to court if you think you can actually get justice (which is pretty ‘ify’ nowadays). But we can (and should) always take all things to God in prayer and seek His guidance in the matter (Phil 4).

The point is that God’s judgments (which the Church should be implementing amongst themselves) are indeed ‘true’ and ‘righteous’ altogether. The word ‘**true**’ here in Ps 19:9 is the Hebrew word *'emeth* (#571), which means: **stability**; (figuratively) **certainty**, **truth** and **trustworthiness**. The word ‘**righteous**’ is the prime root *tsadaq* (#6663), which means: **to be** (causatively, **make**) **right** (in a moral or forensic sense). And the word ‘**altogether**’ is *yachad* (#3162), which means: **a unit**, i.e. (adverb) **unitedly**: -alike, at all (once), both, likewise, only, (al-) together, withal. **So, God’s judgments are stable and trustworthy because they are based upon truth**. As such they make things ‘right’ and *that* is what unifies people. When a ‘wrong’ that someone does to another is ‘made right’ then people can live in peace. For example, God’s Laws on theft say that the thief must not only pay back what they stole but also with restitution. And if they could not pay back (with restitution) then they were to be ‘sold’ into slavery until their debt was paid (Ex 22:3). While this may seem ‘harsh’ to our perverted way of thinking in today’s world, it’s very fair and right. If the thief had only been stealing to get food for himself (and/or family) then someone would very likely have compassion and offer to buy their service for only a short time. Additionally, the poor person would likely find a job this way. But if someone was a real jerk and stealing from others just to feed their lusts then they likely would have to work off their debts for far longer. It therefore ‘makes right’ the ‘wrong’ of the theft by, not only giving back what was stolen, but also compensating the victim for their loss as well as the time and money spent to get justice.

And this is far better than sending someone to prison which has to be funded by the taxpayers. In that system (which we have today) not only does the ‘victim’ *not* get compensated but they (along with all of society) has to pay to support the criminal’s being locked up and there is no justice at all done. Though the criminal may lose their liberty for a time, they are actually being rewarded because other people are paying for their ‘room and board’ while they are locked up. Again, that’s not justice at all. This is but one example but there are many more that can easily be seen. Today we complain about the ramped crime that continues to grow but it does so simply because God’s judgments are not adhered to in our nation. It truly would not take long to eradicate crime if we simply obeyed God’s Laws. However, to do so means people would have

to ‘fear God’ and obey Him... and that is not going to happen on a large scale until the true King of kings and Lord of lords (Jesus Christ) returns to forcefully implement God’s righteous Laws with a ‘rod of iron’ (Rev 19:15). But our own corruption does not change the timeless truth that indeed *the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether*. Just because our nation is too foolish and/or stubborn to believe in, and obey, God doesn’t change the fact that He is *righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works* (Ps 145:17). And, as Deut 32:4 points out, He is THE Rock because His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He...

1 In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

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:

5 For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust.

6 The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor; and the steps of the needy.

7 The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.

8 Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.

9 With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

Isa 26:1-9

We’ll pick this up in part 6...

AMEN.