

Washington church of Christ

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The Washington Messenger

Volume 2 – Number 41

December 15, 2013

Order of Services Sunday December 15, 2013

Song Leader	Daniel Wydro
Prayer	Pete Ferencze
Preaching	Bob James
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	Bob James
Prayer for the Cup	Bob Wydro
Prayer for the Collection	Scott Thomas
Assisting at the Table	Patrick Wydro
Scripture Reading	Bob James
Morning Closing Prayer	Bill Duryea
Evening Opening Prayer	Ralph Ruggiero
Announcements	Stan Thompson

Schedule of Weekly Services

Sunday Morning Bible Classes	9:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 am
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Classes	7:30 pm
Thursday Morning Bible Study	11:00 am

The Word of God in Comfort...

Your hands have made me and fashioned me; Give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments. Those who fear You will be glad when they see me, Because I have hoped in Your word. I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are right, And that in faithfulness You have afflicted me. Let, I pray, Your merciful kindness be for my comfort, According to Your word to Your servant. Let Your tender mercies come to me, that I may live; For Your law is my delight. Let the proud be ashamed, For they treated me wrongfully with falsehood; But I will meditate on Your precepts. Let those who fear You turn to me, Those who know Your testimonies. Let my heart be blameless regarding Your statutes, That I may not be ashamed. (Psalms 119:73-80 NKJV)

For me, one of the great joys of reading the Psalms comes from being able to follow the themes of David's afflictions from their inception to their remedy from the Lord.

Psalms 119 is at times called an alphabetical Psalm. It is the longest of the Psalms, and it consists of 22 sections, or strophes. In literature, a group of verses that form a distinct unit within a writing is often referred to as a strophe. This term is synonymous to what we call a stanza in music.

In the 119th Psalm we find one of these strophes in verses 73 to 80. Here the psalmist seems to address the theme of his personal affliction. He speaks of the proud who treat him badly, (Psalms 119:78). But he knows that God is in control. It is He who has used the affliction to bring the psalmist back to Himself (Psalms 119:75). Now, experiencing God's mercy, the Psalmist is comforted (Psalms 119:76).

All mankind experience various "afflictions" in this life ... and, I believe that there is knowledge to be gained, and comfort to be derived from our study and applications of the Psalms, as well as all of God's Word as it is revealed in the Bible.

This strophe opens with the confession that God is the Creator...

Your hands have made me and fashioned me; Give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments. (Psalms 119:73 NKJV)

The psalmist understands that he is the creation of God, and has been molded like the potter molds his clay (Genesis 2:7).

But the psalmist also realized that he needs to be "remade" by God, as he writes in the later part of verse 73, "Give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments." ... and, having been instructed by God, he will be a blessing to fellow believers. When God blesses us, and we live according to His Will, He also blesses others through us. Thus the psalmist continues to say ...

Those who fear You will be glad when they see me, Because I have hoped in Your word. (Psalms 119:74 NKJV)

His hope will encourage them to hope also. His witness will lift their spirits.

Of his own affliction, the psalmist writes ...

I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are right, And that in faithfulness You have afflicted me. (Psalms 119:75 NKJV)

Although he has experienced pain and hardship, he never doubted the justice of God. He realized, and confesses, that God's judgments were right, and that whatever has come to him, he deserved it.

If we were all sent to hell, God would still be just. Since we are sinners, the amazing thing is not that some are lost ... the amazing thing is that any are saved.

In the earlier strophe the psalmist confesses that he had gone astray before God's punishment came in the form of affliction ...

Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word. (Psalms 119:67 NIV)

This affliction, however, is redemptive, and it has brought him back to faith ...

It is good for me that I have been afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes. (Psalms 119:71 NKJV)

Embraced by God again, he knows His mercy, forgiveness, and peace, which all come from living in His kingdom under His covenant ...

Let, I pray, Your merciful kindness be for my comfort, According to Your word to Your servant. (Psalms 119:76 NKJV)

This section especially resonates with me in that it reaffirms how we truly live when God's tender mercy comes to us. We do not merely exist, but live ... we are lively, full of life, and vigorous. We don't really know what life is until we know God!

Let the proud be ashamed, For they treated me wrongfully with falsehood; But I will meditate on Your precepts. (Psalms 119:78 NKJV)

The proud are those who have not lived under the authority of God's Word. They were the contributing factor in the psalmist's perversion and subsequent affliction in that their lies led him astray. Now, however, he is back, and he proclaims a promise to meditate on God's precepts.

Let those who fear You turn to me, Those who know Your testimonies. (Psalms 119:79 NKJV)

Next, he calls out for those who fear God ... namely, "those who know Your testimonies," to turn to Him. In this those who are God-fearing are defined ... they are people of God's Word. They are the ones that the psalmist now wants to be in his company.

And finally, he asks for himself...

Let my heart be blameless regarding Your statutes, That I may not be ashamed. (Psalms 119:80 NKJV)

His motive for desiring a pure heart, that he not be ashamed, is similar to our thought in last week's bulletin on those who had forgotten how to blush. His ultimate shame would be being found out by God Himself ... the shame of being a hypocrite and being exposed as one on the Day of Judgment. The comfort of this verse, however, is that God will answer his prayer. He and He alone will establish our hearts blameless.

But how can we know this?

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:1 NKJV)

Our Prayer List...

For Spiritual Responsiveness – All of our wayward members ... Georgia DeLorenzo ... Sondra DeLorenzo

For Physical Healing – John Baxter ... Larry Smith (Sharon Ferencze's brother) ... Frank and Antoinette Salerno (Annie's parents) ... Mary Celentano's father

For Wisdom and Good Judgment – The Leaders of our congregation ... the leaders of our nation

For God's Care and Good Providence – Our young people away at college ... Our young people here at Washington ... our members who are traveling ... the men and women in military service ... our congregation.

EVENTS AND NOTES

UPCOMING EVENTS THAT WE ARE AWARE OF ARE ...

- ▲ STAN THOMPSON IS SCHEDULED TO PRESENT THE MORNING LESSON ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 5TH.
- ▲ THE NEXT MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 5TH, STARTING AT 4PM.
- ▲ ADDITIONALLY, THE LADIES BIBLE STUDY IS SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 5TH AS WELL ... STARTING AT 4PM.
- ▲ OUR NEXT THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY WILL BE ON JANUARY 9TH, 2014 AT 11:00AM.