

Turn Away My Reproach
Psalm 119:38-40

In **Psalm 119:33-40** the psalmist prayed, “Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way. Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear. Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good. Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.”

Throughout the eight verses of **Psalm 119:33-40**, the young man of God delivered a series of nine prayer requests unto the Lord. In **verse 33** he prayed, “Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes.” In **verse 34** he prayed, “Give me understanding.” In **verse 35** he prayed, “Make me to go in the path of thy commandments.” In **verse 36** he prayed, “Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.” In the opening portion of **verse 37**, he prayed, “Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.” In the closing portion of **verse 37**, he prayed, “And quicken thou me in thy way.” In **verse 38** he prayed, “Stablish thy word unto thy servant.” In **verse 39** he prayed, “Turn away my reproach which I fear.” Finally, in **verse 40** he prayed, “Quicken me in thy righteousness.”

As we consider this series of prayer requests, we find that they can be divided into two parts. The first six requests concern the psalmist’s burden for direction in the way of righteousness. On the other hand, the last three requests of the whole series concern the psalmist’s burden for deliverance from the troubles of life. In this message we shall set our focus upon those last three requests concerning the burden for deliverance. Now, we recognize that these three requests concerned the burden for deliverance because in second of the three requests, as found in **verse 39**, the psalmist prayed, “Turn away my reproach which I fear.” Even so, we shall encounter and learn from the psalmist’s dependence on the Lord, desire for deliverance, and depth of spiritual motivation.

1. A prayer of Divine Dependence

In **verse 38** the psalmist prayed, “Stablish thy word unto thy servant.” Herein the psalmist was expressing his dependence upon the Lord for the deliverance that he desired. Indeed, he was expressing his dependence of faith upon the Lord to establish and fulfill the promises of His Word unto His servants. The psalmist recognized that throughout His Word the Lord our God has promised grace and mercy to help in time of need unto His faithful servants. Even so, this young man of God set the whole dependence of his faith upon the faithfulness of the Lord to fulfill that promise of grace and mercy. Again and again throughout this psalm, the young man of God revealed and expressed this dependence upon the faithfulness of the Lord unto His Word of promise. In **verse 25** the psalmist prayed, “My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.” In **verse 28** he prayed, “My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word.” In **verses 41-42** he prayed, “Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, even thy salvation, according to thy word [according to the promise of thy word]. So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word.” In **verse 49** he prayed, “Remember the word unto thy servant, upon

which thou hast caused me to hope.” In **verse 58** he prayed, “I intreated thy favour with my whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word.” In **verse 76** he prayed, “Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.” In **verse 107** he prayed, “I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word.” In **verses 114-116** he prayed, “Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word. Depart from me, ye evildoers: for I will keep the commandments of my God. Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope.” In **verse 154** he prayed, “Plead my cause, and deliver me: quicken me according to thy word.” Finally, in **verse 170** the psalmist prayed, “Let my supplication come before thee: deliver me according to thy word.” In his time of trouble and tribulation, this young man of God completed founded his dependence of faith and hope for deliverance upon the faithfulness of the Lord to His Word. In like manner, in times of need and trouble we also should found our dependence of faith and hope for deliverance upon our Lord God’s unfailing faithfulness to establish and fulfill the promise of His Word unto His faithful servants.

2. A prayer for Circumstantial Deliverance

In **verse 39** the psalmist prayed, “Turn away my reproach which I fear.” Herein the psalmist was expressing his burden for deliverance from circumstantial trouble and reproach. This trouble and reproach was a fearful matter in the psalmist’s life; therefore, he sought for the Lord to be gracious and merciful in deliverance. Throughout the psalm he presented various descriptions of that fearful trouble and reproach. In the opening portion of **verse 23**, he gave report, “Princes also did sit and speak against me.” In the opening portion of **verse 51**, he gave report, “The proud have had me greatly in derision.” In the opening portion of **verse 61** he gave report, “The bands of the wicked have robbed me.” In the opening portion of **verse 69**, he gave report, “The proud have forged a lie against me.” In the opening portion of **verse 78**, the psalmist prayed and gave report, “Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause.” In **verse 85** he gave report, “The proud have digged pits for me, which are not after thy law.” Again in the middle of **verse 86**, he gave report concerning those proud ones, “They persecute me wrongfully.” Yet again in the opening portion of **verse 87**, he gave report concerning them, “They had almost consumed me upon earth.” In the opening portion of **verse 95**, he gave report, “The wicked have waited for me to destroy me.” In the opening portion of **verse 110**, “The wicked have laid a snare for me.” In the opening portion of **verse 143**, the psalmist cried forth, “Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me.” In the opening portion of **verse 157** he gave report, “Many are my persecutors and mine enemies.” Finally, in the opening portion of **verse 161**, he gave report, “Princes have persecuted me without cause.” Thus the young man of God prayed for deliverance from the gracious and merciful hand of the Lord. In like manner, in our times of trouble, anguish, reproach, and persecution, we should call upon the Lord in faith for His grace and mercy to deliver us in our time of need.

3. A Prayer with Spiritual Depth

In **verse 40** the psalmist prayed, “Quicken me in thy righteousness.” Herein the psalmist we expressing his motivation for deliverance from trouble and reproach. He did not desire deliverance simply in order that he might return to an enjoyment of life’s pleasures, things, and successes, as is commonly the case for some many individuals. Rather, the young man

of God desired for the Lord to deliver him and enliven (quicken) him only within the realm of the Lord's righteousness. He desired for the Lord to deliver him and enliven him only in a manner that the Lord's righteousness might be honored and that he might progress more freely in the Lord's righteousness. Indeed, he desired deliverance in order that he might more freely serve and obey the Lord. In **verse 17** the psalmist expressed this desire, saying, "Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word." Again in **verse 88** he expressed this desire, saying, "Quicken me after thy lovingkindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth." Yet again in **verse 117** he expressed this desire, saying, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually." And yet again in **verse 134** he expressed this desire, saying, "Deliver me from the oppression of man: so will I keep thy precepts." Finally, in **verses 145-146** he expressed this desire, saying, "I cried with my whole heart; hear me, O LORD: I will keep thy statutes. I cried unto thee; save me, and I shall keep thy testimonies." Even so, the psalmist's prayer for deliverance was not a prayer of selfish desire, but was a prayer of spiritual depth. In like manner, when we pray unto the Lord for grace and mercy to deliver in time of trouble, we also should pray with depth of spiritual motivation – that thereby we might more freely serve our Lord and walk in righteousness.