

“The Goodness of God in Chastisement”
Psalm 119:65-72
(Preached at Trinity, January 6, 2013)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Tonight as we begin the ninth stanza of **Psalm 119** we find the Hebrew letter ט “teth” as the key letter of these 8 verses. The Hebrew word translated “good” – טוֹב begins with this letter. And we find this as the key word of this stanza. Its used 6 times, although translated in various ways.
Psalm 119:65 KJV - "Thou hast dealt well"
Psalm 119:66 KJV - " Teach me good "
Psalm 119:68 KJV - "Thou *art* good, and doest good"
Psalm 119:71 KJV - "*It is* good for me that I have been afflicted"
Psalm 119:72 KJV - "The law of thy mouth *is* better unto me than thousands of gold and silver."
2. Once again, we find the goodness of God which has captivated the hearts of His people. The context of this stanza seems to flow around **Verse 67** where we find the psalmist recovering from some form of fall into sin that resulted in the chastening of God.
" Before I was afflicted I went astray"
. . . but then his return.
"but now have I kept thy word."
“Before . . . but now” is the key focus.
3. The term “backslider” is grossly misused today, particularly in churches that have a poor soteriology.
 - A. How do you classify members who have joined the church but seldom attend?
Some haven’t attended for years.
Some would say, “Well, they are just backslidden.”
 - B. How do you classify church members who continue to compromise their commitment to Christ? They persist in the same sins year after year.
“Well, they are just weak, carnal Christians.”
 - C. Christianity knows nothing of such. One of the characteristics of a Christian is his love for Christ and his persevering faith. But a true Christian *can* fall into periods of sin, sometimes grievous sin that grieves the Spirit and brings a reproach on his profession of Christ Jesus. It hinders our fellowship with God and our prayers. Sometimes it can lead to the affliction of God’s chastisement. This is what we find in this stanza of **Psalm 119**.
Psalm 119:67 KJV - "Before I was afflicted I went astray"
4. I want to divide this into three sections
 - I. The backsliding described – **Verse 67** – “I went astray”
The indication is that God used enemies as the affliction – **Verses 69-70**
 - II. The believer declares God’s justness and goodness in his affliction – **Ver. 65, 68**
He declares the good purpose in the affliction – **Verse 71**
 - III. He pleads God’s aid against future failure – **Verses 66, 68,**
He declares the infinite value of God’s Word – **Verse 72**

- I. The backsliding described – **Verse 67** – “I went astray”
- A. Notice the openness of his confession - “I went astray”
1. The word often points to sin
 2. It wasn’t necessarily willful open rebellion but careless ignorance that brought God’s reproof
Numbers 15:28 KJV - "And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the LORD"
 3. David was a Godly man; a man after God’s own heart. But he was not free of the sin that so often afflicts us
 4. He fell into sin but the sin was of limited duration
- B. He seems to imply it was God’s chastening that brought him back
1. He sets a contrast before us - “before I was afflicted . . . but now . . .”
 2. We are not told the nature of his sin, nor the duration of his sin. But we do find God wouldn’t allow him to persist in sin
 3. We also are not told the specific details of the chastening but the indication is that God used enemies as the affliction – **Verses 69-70**
 - a. David often declared his innocence before his enemies. Their behavior before him did not reflect his behavior before them.
Psalm 119:78 KJV - "Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause"
 - b. But this wasn’t a declaration of total innocence. Although David had not sinned against them, he was not innocent before God. God sent his enemies to humble him and bring him to repentance.
 4. The true believer never persists in sin. Sin doesn’t characterize us.
1 John 3:6 KJV - "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him."
The verb tense signifies a continuing practice of sin.
1 John 3:6 ESV - "No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him."
- II. The believer declares God’s justness and goodness in his affliction – **Verses 65, 68**
- A. He declares the justness of God’s chastisement
Psalm 119:65 KJV - "Thou hast dealt well (טוֹב) with thy servant, O LORD, according unto thy word."
1. Spurgeon: “He hath done all things well: the rule has no exception. In providence and in grace, in giving prosperity and sending adversity, in everything Jehovah hath dealt well with us.”
 2. David is saying God had dealt well even in his affliction. God’s judgment is always right – His justice always perfect
Psalm 119:68 KJV - "Thou *art* good, and doest good"
 3. He’ll repeat this in the next stanza
Psalm 119:75 KJV - "I know, O LORD, that thy judgments *are* right, and *that* thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me."

4. On the day of judgment God will give every man exactly what he deserves. His judgment will be perfect and just.
 - a. Paul describes God's judgment as our wages – something we have earned.
Romans 6:23 KJV - "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - b. He described it as having a great storehouse that we are filling up with the wrath of God
Romans 2:5-6 KJV - "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; ⁶ Who will render to every man according to his deeds"
 5. The only hope of humanity is God's mercy. For those who have trusted Christ, although they deserve God's condemnation, God looks upon them through the righteousness of Christ.
Jeremiah 31:34 NAS - "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."
- B. David declares God's good purpose in afflicting him
Psalms 119:68 KJV - "Thou *art* good, and doest good"
Psalms 119:71 KJV - "*It is* good for me that I have been afflicted"
1. How is affliction good for us? It is a token of God's love towards His own children.
Hebrews 12:6 KJV - " For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."
 2. Again, **Verse 67** implies that it was God's affliction that turned him
It is always good for us to be turned away from sin
Hebrews 12:11 KJV - " Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."
 3. Even in His chastisement God has good purposes for His people.
Notice how David recognizes this. God's affliction served to turn David's heart and give him a greater delight in God's Word
Psalms 119:67 KJV - "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word."
Psalms 119:71 KJV - " *It is* good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes."

III. He pleads God's aid against future failure – **Verses 66, 68** – “Teach me”
 He declares the infinite value of God's Word – **Verse 72**

A. The lost person murmurs and complains at affliction

1. He truly believes he deserves to be free from all discomfort and complains loudly when affliction comes. He seldom sees it as being from the hand of God but when he does he becomes angry. His affliction proves to have no spiritual benefit at all.
2. Unregenerate Israel stands as a picture of the heart of fallen man
Exodus 16:2-3 KJV - " And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: ³ And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, *and* when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger."
Exodus 32:9 KJV - "And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it *is* a stiffnecked people:"
Numbers 14:27-29 KJV - " How long *shall I bear with* this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. ²⁸ Say unto them, *As truly as I live*, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: ²⁹ Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me,"

B. The believer searches his heart in affliction and sees great value in God's chastisement

1. Sometimes believers are guilty of behaving just like a lost person. They seek no spiritual benefit in their affliction.
 - a. They complain in affliction and seldom examine to see if their sin has brought the affliction upon them. The Bible teaches plainly that sometimes our sickness is due to our sin.
James 5:14-16 NAS - " Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; ¹⁵ and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. ¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed"
 - b. Often our first course of action is to seek the remedy for our sickness rather than examining the cause.
2. The Godly man continually prays that God will search out his heart
Psalms 139:23-24 KJV - " Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: ²⁴ And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."
3. If he sees sin in his life he quickly repents that he might be restored to a proper communion with Christ.

- C. The Godly man prays diligently that God will keep him from sin
Psalm 119:66 KJV - "Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments."
Psalm 119:68 KJV - "Thou *art* good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes."
Psalm 119:72 KJV - " The law of thy mouth *is* better unto me than thousands of gold and silver."
1. The word for “better” in **Verse 72** is טוב – usually translated “good.” The Septuagint translates **Verse 72**
 “The Law of your mouth is good to me”
Psalm 19:10-11 KJV - "More to be desired *are they* than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.
¹¹ Moreover by them is thy servant warned: *and* in keeping of them *there is* great reward."
Psalm 119:72 KJV - "The law of thy mouth *is* better unto me than thousands of gold and silver."
 2. He recognized that the beauty of a life conformed to the beauty of God’s Law. He had discovered the source of true riches.
 3. Murray Brett writes in *Growing Up in Grace* – “God has placed the affection of delight in every human soul, but by nature we delight in everything but God and His law. However, through the experience of the new birth, God rewrites His law upon our hearts and places a new and holy affection within the core of our being which delights in the law of God as the rule of life for the believer.”
 4. The psalmist describes the Law of God as his greatest treasure, his delight of delights and his greatest treasure because it reflects the character of God and provides the standard by which we might reflect God’s glory and the means by which we will find our greatest treasure in Him.

Conclusion:

1. Suffering is never pleasurable. But it can be a wonderful gift from God. God is conforming us to His righteousness.
2. We must recognize the beauty of life that reflects the holiness of God. The law of God reflects this holiness. Because of this we should see the law of God as being of infinite value and of the greatest of delights.
3. Anything God uses to conform us to His perfect law must be seen as the greatest good.