



## PSALM 119, Part 18

Tsadhe

This is Holly with Presence Point and welcome to week 18 of *Psalms for Shepherds* series. Today, we're looking at verses 137 through 144, the stanza of this psalm that is based on the 18<sup>th</sup> letter of the Hebrew alphabet, Tsadhe.

As we read this portion of *Psalms 119*, listen for the psalmist's reference to how right and true and perfect he has found God's ways to be.

<sup>137</sup> O Lord, you are righteous,  
and your regulations are fair.

<sup>138</sup> Your laws are perfect  
and completely trustworthy.

<sup>139</sup> I am overwhelmed with indignation,  
for my enemies have disregarded your words.

<sup>140</sup> Your promises have been thoroughly tested;  
that is why I love them so much.

<sup>141</sup> I am insignificant and despised,  
but I don't forget your commandments.

<sup>142</sup> Your justice is eternal,  
and your instructions are perfectly true.

<sup>143</sup> As pressure and stress bear down on me,  
I find joy in your commands.

<sup>144</sup> Your laws are always right;  
help me to understand them so I may live.

It is clear the psalmist believes God is righteous and just, as well as believes they contrast greatly with the deceptions of the wicked.

Of the first two verses of this passage, Bible Commentator, Matthew Henry, says this:

"Here is,

"(1) The righteousness of God, the infinite rectitude and perfection of his nature. As he is what he is, so he is what he should be, and in everything acts as becomes him; there is nothing wanting, nothing amiss, in God; his will is the eternal rule of equity, and he is righteous, for he does all according to it.

“(2) The righteousness of his government—He rules the world by his providence, according to the principles of justice, and never did, nor ever can do, any wrong to any of his creatures. Every word of God is pure, and he will be true to it; He perfectly knows the merits of every cause and will judge accordingly.

“(3) The righteousness of his commands—which he has given to be the rule of our obedience which are backed with His sovereign authority, and to which He requires our obedience. [His commands] are exceedingly righteous and faithful. In fact, they are righteousness and faithfulness itself.

“As He acts like Himself, so His law requires that we act like ourselves and, like him, that we be just to ourselves and to all we deal with, true to all the engagements we lay ourselves under, both to God and man. That which we are commanded to practice is righteous; that which we are commanded to believe is faithful. It is necessary to our faith and obedience that we be convinced of this.”

That’s quite a quote by Matthew Henry!

Behavior in accord with God’s standards and faithful obedience to whatever He calls us to, that is how God’s righteous, perfect ways, compel us to respond and that is indeed what the psalmist was saying in this passage. No wonder what was happening around him—even as stress and pressure bore down upon him, he would find joy in God’s instructions.

Even when overwhelmed by his enemies’ disregard for God’s ways, he would still love God’s promises because he knew they were tried and true. He acknowledges what we must often acknowledge and that is this: we do not always understand God’s laws, but, as the psalmist does, we must ask God to help us understand His requirements so we can follow them.

The author of this passage from *Psalms 119* is clearly devoted to the Father and, fellow under-shepherd, we must be devoted to Him as well. How else will we shepherd well those the Good Shepherd has entrusted to our care? How else will we live as the Father requires—righteously, faithfully, and obediently?

As I read this passage, it occurred to me the assurance of the Father’s righteousness is a truth we can rest in. And, that rest allows us, with confidence, to devote ourselves to Him and obey His Word.

The Puritans, members of a religious reform movement that arose within the Church of England in the late 16<sup>th</sup> Century, believed that ceremonies and practices not rooted in Scripture should be eliminated from religious practice. In essence, they wanted to purify the church, a bit different from the pilgrims who wanted to separate from it. Both groups made heroic voyages across the ocean to the New World and settled in what is now the New England area of the United States.

Although their differences broke Massachusetts into a number of different states ultimately, it seemed the Puritans had a deep and meaningful prayer life, as illustrated in the collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions in the book, *The Valley of Vision*.

One of those prayers reminded me of the Tsadhe, the portion of *Psalms 119* we are reviewing today. Please join me in praying this Puritan prayer, in an updated format for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

O God Most High, Most Glorious  
The thought of Your infinite serenity cheers me,  
For I am toiling and moiling, troubled and distressed,  
but You are forever at perfect peace.  
Your designs cause You no fear or care of unfulfillment,  
they stand fast as the eternal hills.  
Your power knows no bond, Your goodness no stint.  
You bring order out of confusion, and my defeats are Your victories:  
The Lord God omnipotent reigns.  
I come to You as a sinner with cares and sorrows,  
to leave every concern entirely to You,  
every sin calling for Christ's precious blood;  
Revive deep spirituality in my heart;  
Let me live near to the great Shepherd,  
hear his voice, know its tones, follow its calls.  
Keep me from deception by causing me to abide in the truth,  
from harm by helping me to walk in the power of the Spirit.  
Give me a more intense faith in the eternal verities,  
burning into me by experience the things I know;  
Let me never be ashamed of the truth of the gospel,  
that I may bear its reproach, vindicate it, see Jesus as its essence,  
know in it the power of the Spirit.  
Lord, help me, for I am often lukewarm and chill;  
unbelief mars my confidence, sin makes me forget You.  
Let the weeds that grow in my soul be cut at their roots;  
Grant me to know that I truly live only when I live to You, that all else is trifling.  
Your presence alone can make me holy, devout, strong, and happy.  
Abide in me, gracious God.  
Amen.

I pray, dear fellow shepherd leader, that you will camp a bit on the words on *Psalms 119*, verses 137 to 144, that you will listen to that prayer again, praying it for yourself and that the Father's righteousness will indeed spur you on to faithful obedience.

He most assuredly deserves it. We most definitely should be compelled to it. And our sheep, the sheep of His pasture who have been made in His image, most definitely merit it.

May you live deeply into your calling this week. Shepherd well, dear friends.