



## PSALM 119, Part 20

Resh

This is Holly with Presence Point and welcome to week 20 of *Psalms for Shepherds* series. Today, we're looking at verses 153 through 160, the stanza of this psalm that is based on the 20<sup>th</sup> letter of the Hebrew alphabet, Resh.

As we read these eight verses of *Psalms 119*, listen for how the psalmist moves from asking God to help him—literally revive him—because God is his redeemer, to asking God to help him—again revive him—because God is merciful, to asking God to help him or, again, revive him because God's Word can be trusted.

Psalms 119, verses 153 through 160:

Look upon my suffering and rescue me,  
for I have not forgotten your instructions.

<sup>154</sup> Argue my case; take my side!

Protect my life as you promised.

<sup>155</sup> The wicked are far from rescue,  
for they do not bother with your decrees.

<sup>156</sup> Lord, how great is your mercy;  
let me be revived by following your regulations.

<sup>157</sup> Many persecute and trouble me,  
yet I have not swerved from your laws.

<sup>158</sup> Seeing these traitors makes me sick at heart,  
because they care nothing for your word.

<sup>159</sup> See how I love your commandments, Lord.  
Give back my life because of your unfailing love.

<sup>160</sup> The very essence of your words is truth;  
all your just regulations will stand forever.

The psalmist is clearly in trouble, suffering an affliction or misery of some sort, and he's begging God to save him. First, he says, because God is his Redeemer, secondly because God is merciful, and lastly because God's Word is truth.

All three traits are true of our God: He is our Avenger, our Kinsman-Redeemer. His compassionate self is abundant. And His Word is, indeed, faithful, reliable, trustworthy, and true.

As I read this psalm, I thought how much the psalmist sounds like us when we come before our Lord in desperation. We often ask for him to save us from whatever we're facing. And, while making the request to Him, we often remind Him of His mercies, how we are promised from His Word which we believe is true and faithful that those mercies are new every morning and we beg Him to shower them down upon us in this day and at this time.

We want God to see our needs, just as the psalmist wanted the Almighty to see his needs. In fact, the psalmist used the same word here that Abraham used when he assured Isaac that God would "see to it" or, in other words, provide the sacrifice necessary for the altar Abraham had built. Abraham knew that God would provide a way to rescue Isaac. And the psalmist knew our Lord would rescue him.

The psalmist asked God to "argue his case" or "plead his defense". The term used to "plead his defense" is tied in with Jesus as our Kinsman-Redeemer, our Surety, Mediator, and Advocate before the throne of God. Just as we find comfort when we lay out our concerns before the Father, knowing He hears us, knowing of His mercy, and knowing His Word is truth, it would seem the psalmist found comfort as well.

Today, we have the benefit of something the psalmist did not have, and that is God's full Word and the book of Hebrews that tells us Jesus is able to "to save completely those who come to God through Him, because he lives to intercede for them." How calming that should be to us!

As the psalmist continued, it is clear he knew that placing this request before the Father on his own merit, would not yield the result for which he hoped. As Bible Commentator, Warren Wiersbe, notes, "but when we come to the Father in the name of the Son and with the help of the Spirit, God in His grace gives us what we do not deserve and, in His mercy, He does not give us what we do deserve."

The psalmist ends this portion of the *Psalms 119* acrostic with this:

<sup>160</sup> The very essence of your words is truth;  
all your just regulations will stand forever.

Every single bit of God's Word is truth not just true, but truth. The psalmist knew what we know, God's Word give us life. Even in the midst of the difficult circumstances, the lowest times in our lives, we must turn to God's Word because it is there we find life. In fact, life to the full.

Fellow under-shepherd, we hear the psalmist petition the Father for life throughout the *Psalms 119*, but it seems that it is concentrated in these eight verses. Maybe you are in what seems the

crescendo of suffering right now. Maybe your team has deserted you, or your family or friends are not standing with you. Maybe you are being falsely accused or, for some other reason, you have called upon the Father to argue your case and take your side.

Fellow under-shepherd, please know that He loves you, please know that He stands with you, please know that Jesus is advocating for you before the throne at this very minute. Please be as assured as Abraham was with Isaac that He will provide whatever you need during this time. Please be assured that He is full of mercy, and that His Word is truth.

He will and He is shepherding you perfectly during this time. My prayer is that you will hear His voice, that you will respond with obedience, and your faith will be bolstered while you experience His mercy and follow His truths.

Thank you for joining me.